

# RIFLESSIONI SULLA GUERRA

affrontare i conflitti  
disarmare le armi

Giairo Daghini

Christian Marazzi

Toni Negri

31 marzo, Fondazione Ratti, ore 18.00

On Monday, February 21, 2022, during a live TV speech, Putin signs the decree whereby Russia recognises the independence of the separatist republics of Donbass from Ukraine. This could have been the starting point of negotiations to resolve the conflict. Instead, at dawn on February 24, Putin invades Ukraine leading to a rapid acceleration of conflict: principally, between Putin's imperial nationalism and Ukrainian hyper-nationalism and also, one prompted by the unease felt by Russia at the expansion of NATO. The unsustainability of the hand-to-hand combat in the city, the depletion of raw materials and energy worldwide, and the ongoing accumulation and occasional demand for weapons in Europe for years indicate that this has been a time of lurking war rather than of solved problems. This war adds to the conflicts, present even before Covid, related to unemployment, the algorithmic capture of the imaginary and the extraction and privatization of wealth. It is necessary to ask ourselves what form the exit out of this war could take.

**Annie Ratti:** Fondazione Antonio Ratti sets out to start a series of talks about urgent issues, including climate crisis, inviting experts to start a conversation to spread collective awareness and create possible solutions to address current and future crises.

It is hard to remain still and silent in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This is an unacceptable and disastrous war, something one would believe unthinkable in the twenty-first century, a time when war cannot be the solution to a conflict.

Fighting for peace today is the priority for each of us and of our institutions.

Understanding the geopolitical dynamics that have led to this war is the first step towards identifying alternative strategies to the widespread rearmament we are witnessing and towards conflict resolution.

I wish now to introduce our three speakers, although I am sure you already know them: Giairo Daghini, former lecturer at the University of Geneva where he founded and directed the magazine *Faces*. As a distinguished theorist refusing the shortcuts of thought, he continues to question the meaning of history, our history, in its great ideal, social, urban, and artistic branches. He is the author of numerous essays on the concept of becoming and the notion of city, such as *Les temps de l'Urbain – Mémoire collective et urbanisation*. Among his most recent publications is *A proposito di nomadologia*.

Christian Marazzi's favorite fields of research have always been monetary theory, the evolution of financial markets and the transformation of the world of work (with a few forays into the philosophy of language), areas which he has explored with his analyses and reflections. From 1985 to 2007 he worked as an economist-researcher at the Dipartimento delle Opere Sociali (now DSS). He has taught at several universities including the University of Political Science in Padua, the State University of New York, the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva, and the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (Supsi), where he currently teaches. For the past ten years he has been teaching a master's course in Art Economics at the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (NABA) in Milan. His main publications include *Il posto dei calzini. La svolta linguistica dell'economia e i suoi effetti sulla politica; E il denaro va; Capitale & Linguaggio; Finanza bruciata; Il comunismo del capitale; Diario della crisi infinita; and Che cos'è il plusvalore*.

Toni Negri has taught political theory in European and American universities. His philosophical research stems from reflection on and analysis of the work of Karl Marx and Spinoza. From the 1960s onwards, Negri (together with Mario Tronti) began a reinterpretation of Marxist thought, later defined as *workerism* and based on the centrality of the workers' movement and the irruption of its subjectivity. His main works include *Proletari e Stato: per una discussione su autonomia operaia e compromesso storico* (Proletarians and the state: for a discussion on workers' autonomy and the historic compromise, 1976), *Factory of Strategy: Thirty-three Lessons on Lenin* (Italian edition, 2004), *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (Italian edition, 1981), *Insurgencias: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Italian edition, 1992), plus the trilogy produced with Michael Hardt: *Empire* (2002), *Multitude – War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004) and *Commonwealth* (2009). His most recent publications include *Inventare il Comune, Books for Burning, Art and Multitude*.

I give the floor to Giairo Daghini.

**Giairo Daghini:** The situation that has led and has made this war explode is very complex and unprecedented in many respects. We are faced with situations that we cannot describe with the words we have always used. We have to think new things. Let us try to consider some of them.

Referring to the present situation, we can mention that on Monday 21 February 2022, in a live TV speech, Putin signed the decree by which Russia recognized the independence from Ukraine of the separatist republics of the Donbass region. This could have been an element in a treaty to resolve a conflict peacefully. Instead, on 24 February 22 Putin invaded Ukraine with an army, heading at full speed into a network of closely related conflicts. This is where a new situation arises, where it is difficult to take a stand for either side, except by completely rejecting the situation per se.

There are several themes that we will try to explore: Putin's imperial nationalism, for instance which contrasts with the Ukrainians' hyper-nationalism; or the conflict between Russia and NATO's armed expansion into Europe. This is an acceleration that this war sets in motion. This war poses, for example, the unsustainability of armed action in the cities, in the very center of Europe, after the tragedies we have witnessed in the past decades. It also poses the problem of weapon accumulation.

Also: this war accelerates a whole set of issues that were already present even prior to the Covid-19 emergency. Work-related, pollution-related, environmental issues that have been with us for a long time, the issue of care. All these conflicts are being dramatically accelerated in this operation, in this war which at first might have seemed to be an issue between Russia and Ukraine. A domestic matter, since Russia and Ukraine are inhabited by people who mostly speak Russian, and who had long lived in a close relationship in terms of culture, imagination, language, etc. Things could have taken that direction, but they exploded. This is our problem.

In the troubled history of Ukraine, between a coup d'état and a democratic revolution, in 2014 and 2015 an agreement had been reached between the representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the representatives of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics, known as the Minsk Agreements. This agreement involved new elections and new forms of government on which a major conflict of culture, policies and economics appeared to be in the process of being resolved. However, no one did anything about it, and this situation led first to a so-called low-intensity war – with thousands of deaths – and then on 24 February, as we all know, Putin decided to invade Ukraine, and instead of resolving the many internal conflicts caused by the quest for autonomy in the Donbass republics, a war was unleashed. The current war is a war of aggression. The attacks taking place in the cities with civilians forced to hide in cellars and basements, constantly fleeing to save their lives, while being bombed, against a background of a complete disintegration of relationships, of subjectivity, are unbearable. I think this is a serious mistake, in relation to any project. Also unbearable is that paradox of imperial nationalism at the core of Putin's actions and that today brings us to a first stance alongside the women and men standing against it in the streets of Russian and Ukrainian cities and who are rebelling against the political capitalism paired with it. Political capitalism is a capitalism built on small oligarchies.

What Putin's nationalism presents as a Russian civilization is actually its own mystification cemented on an inflexible war code and the moral ghosts of a colorful Orthodox church. Putin's war contains an attempt to erase the virtuality of an opening towards Europe, an opening that has not been ignored by Russia.

The Russia of the great Soviet history is a Russia that belongs to Europe, if only because of its relationship with Marx, with the critical thought of industrial capitalism, which is something that has to do with European culture. Russia has been part of it. So Putin's actions and thinking at this time also aim to erase a virtual opening on Europe. This is one of the reasons why this war is a war we must stand against. Not only for us, but for a large part of the multitudes in Russia and Ukraine who think this way. Not closure within a Putinist world, but openness to another history, not closure within the world of nationalism that accompanies this war, not the impossibility of resolving conflicts within a society, but a request of openness even in people's behavior.

What is important to note is that wartime is also a time of nationalisms, a time of reduction of relations between cultures that morphs into an antagonism between nationalisms. This is the tension that characterizes our contemporaneity, and that time that materially spread across the European space, with the devastating Yugoslav wars, when a world of connections and coexistences was destroyed. And with the violence on migrants in the ongoing control of the so-called external borders, and it has all happened according to a strange paradox. The movements that have opposed these violent policies, i.e. against migrants, against the Yugoslav collectivities and many others, have fought for a European space of struggle and democracy, but operating within territories of resurgent sovereigntisms, that are in contradiction with the reasons for which those societies were founded in the first place.

The lesson we draw from these phases and thoughts is that war is imposing itself as a constituent principle within the European Union itself. The rearmament that has been going on for years is there to prove it. This accumulation is imposing itself as a constituent principle. Rearmament as a global trend is becoming the criterion around which national and EU budgets are reorganized. These budgets are giving way to an ominous moment that could be defined as war Keynesianism: investing for weapons, for war.

Think of the last few decades in our country and the difficulties encountered by the great European project. In the wake of the war, within the framework of the deadly target of 2% of GDP, the common European defense project is being accelerated, but with the prospect of operational and political subordination to NATO. This is deeply connected to the war in Ukraine.

From this point of view, the eastward expansion that began in the late 1990s is crowned by the silencing of conflicts that had emerged regarding the question of rule of law in the Visegrád countries, Poland in particular. This rearmament, this warfare union based on an ideal opposition to the enemy, is also crowned today by the reckless weapon accumulation that has been going on for years in Europe, which appears foreboding of war rather than conflict solutions.

NATO is involved in this movement, in this militarization process of European territories, but it is part of the problem, not the solution. NATO has built an armed barrier against Putin's imperial nationalism, and this armed barrier is moving responding to its own purposes, not to prevent war.

In this context, another question must be asked in relation to this rearmament, which is a global trend. For example, in the European projects, the virtuality that the Next Generation plan contained in a direction of potential for welfare renewal is being set aside in view of rearmament. Even the Green New Deal, which seemed to be on the European states' agenda, is being abandoned. While these rearmament plans to fight an enemy without having resolved the conflicts that unite those who make it, some fundamental problems of the environment, of development, of the revival of a labor dimension, are being set aside at a global level. Perhaps you could say something about this, Christian.

**Christian Marazzi:** We obviously don't know how this war will end. That is why I think it is right to remember Gramsci's definition of interregnum. That time when the old dies and the new cannot be born. That tragic time of no longer and not yet. And that is somehow related to what Larry Fink, founder and head of BlackRock, the largest investment fund listed at \$10 trillion that he moves everywhere, wrote in his annual letter to the CEOs. In this letter, which has been frequently quoted in recent times, he says "the Russian invasion of Ukraine has put an end to globalization as we have known it for the last thirty years." In this letter he talks about onshore and nearshore, that is to say the reterritorialization of supply chains, of value chains, which are no longer so extensive and – as we have already seen during the pandemic – so vulnerable to exogenous shocks. There is therefore an attempt to move these chains closer to the places where value is produced and distributed: a sort of reterritorialization of these value chains and the start of probable protectionism.

Fink also mentions three risks. The first is a risk for the work sector. In addition to all this tragedy, we are now faced with problems that have to do directly with employment. For example, the central banks around the world, which have been confronted for months with the resurgence of inflation, are having to decide whether to end the policy they have been pursuing for years – the ultra-expansionary monetary policy of raising interest rates, etc. – or to continue with these policies in order to avoid a recession at the very time when it looked as if the economies could emerge from the pandemic crisis and avoid falling back into recession. Work is a fundamental issue that must be kept in mind as seen by the greatest representatives of global financial capitalism.

The second problem is the price of energy, which is bound to affect the various populations in a discriminatory manner. The least well-off, the neediest and the weakest will be heavily penalized, both in terms of fuel and in terms of heating and electricity, those basic goods for domestic and family life. The same problem is climate, the transition from carbon to green energy that according to Fink will have to "pass through many shades of brown" on its way to green. The exit from fossil energy is postponed, and this too is an area in which this game is being played, this great new game of war and its consequences. So, not anymore and not yet: I believe that at a time like this, it is to some extent useful to at least remember how, when the Second World War was still going on, between 1940 and 1945, we thought about the aftermath of World War II. In 1944, still in the middle of the war, the foundations for the new international monetary system were laid at Bretton Woods. In 1945 the foundations were built for UN and in 1949 for NATO. It is interesting to note that the problem of defense appeared at the end of this periodization, because the dollar, as the Bretton Woods agreements would show, would be the real offensive weapon in the season that followed World War II. It is also interesting to recall that in the words of Lord Ismay, the first Secretary General of NATO, the purpose of NATO is to keep the Americans in, the Russians out and the Germans under. It seems to me that they have been quite faithful to this initial purpose. This makes me envision a new possible monetary system, a system that today is under great pressure, but that in a hopefully near future could appear. When we look at the whole problem of raw materials, for example, today Biden decided to release the oil reserves of the United States in order to cope with the inflation of fuel in particular, which is very strong in the United States. The threshold of four dollars per gallon, which is a psychological threshold, has now been crossed. Above that threshold, the Americans get pissed off. In view of the Midterm elections, and of course this is a domestic operation that will perhaps also have an effect internationally, since the price of oil has already reduced. This however does not change the European problem, i.e. the problem of the dependence of countries like Germany, Italy and many others on Russian energy raw materials. This also allows me to hypothesize that the United States may emerge from this situation as a winner, but certainly making Europe pay for a series of issues.

The first issue at stake is that of currency. Today, Putin himself decreed once again that as of tomorrow, exported raw materials will have to be paid for in rubles. This is an operation that allows Russia, at least in theory, to bypass the measures that have effectively frozen half of its currency

reserves with the other central banks. We'll see how this turns out, but in general I can say one thing: this is a very ill-advised measure. If there is one thing the Americans can't stand, it's having their dollar touched. We have a precedent, more than one in fact: that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, when he said that he wanted to get rid of the dollar for selling oil. Well, after three months Iraq was invaded. Of course, the cause-effect relationship was never officially established. The least one can say is that touching the dollar is bad luck. Chavez in turn suffered three attacks in a row after trying to move in this direction too.

So: what is the situation from a currency point of view? It is a situation in which much is at stake in the conflict between the dollar, which still counts for 60% of the world's currency reserves, and the renminbi, which counts for very little at the moment, only 3%, while the euro counts for 20%. In short, there is this scenario in which an important game, a monetary war – an extension of the military war with other means – will be played on the division between zones of influence and monetary areas. This brings us back to the question: have we reached the end of globalization or is a different re-globalization underway? I think we are facing a globalization differentiated by currency areas, including the dollar and the renminbi.

Among other things, it seems that Saudi Arabia has also asked to have its oil paid for in renminbi. But why is it so important to talk about these issues in the light of this tragedy that we are living through every day as helpless spectators? Because the dollar today has even greater strength in the face of US public debt, just as the euro has strength in the face of public debt in the various EU member states, which has been weighed down by the pandemic crisis and by this phase in which rearmament will greatly increase public debt.

The fact that the dollar remains a hegemonic currency on a world scale is necessary for the United States to continue with its so-called imperial policy. It is through the dollar, which is used by non-American countries to buy treasury bonds issued to cover the American public debt, that the Americans can avoid increasing the tax burden on their own taxpayers, and particularly on the rich.

On this level, a very important game is being played and we will see how it ends. In my opinion, it is right to look to the future, even though we are caught up in the present, for which there is no short-term solution. Another point that I think is important to stress is the effects of this situation on people, on workers and on those who are not working. You know that we are coming out of the pandemic crisis, but during this crisis something very important happened, namely that mass phenomenon that took place on a global scale called "The great resignation". That phenomenon of questioning work as the essence of life. For 40 years, work has been the neo-liberal obsession that has humiliated and squeezed us, and the pandemic, perhaps through the homeopathic effect of curing evil with evil, has in some way put back at the center of the concerns of millions of people the question of the relationship between life and work: should we live to work or should we work to live?

Within this trend we have seen the phenomenon of inflation, of price increases generated by the rise in raw materials – increases that were triggered before the invasion of Ukraine, in the autumn of 2021. The central banks said it would be temporary, but in fact there was an increase in inflation embedded in our economies. This increase was caused by the rise in commodities and also blamed on what is the essence of the 30 years of liberalism that we have lived through: financialization, deregulation, privatization. Just think that the price of oil is set in Amsterdam and London by a private platform that defines the price of fuel before it is taxed. As you know, taxation on oil accounts for an average of 60%. This is because private agencies have been delegated to regulate the price of a raw material that is still so fundamental to our lives. We are faced with this problem. On the one hand, a process of rethinking and refocusing on the question of labor and its meaning, and above all of life with respect to work, and then with predatory policies from the monetary and economic point of view, which we try to mitigate through the containment of taxation. I think this is complete nonsense, that is, to think of reducing the price of fuel by reducing excise duties. Not for anything else, but because if we really want to free ourselves from dependence on

raw materials imported from the Russians, then we might as well not reduce prices and therefore increase demand, but instead keep those prices high in order to be able to force our way out of dependence on fossil fuels. Moreover, what we have inherited from the pandemic is that there are people who do essential jobs and others who work from home by telecommuting and can actually do without car transport. Instead, I think it is much better to move in the direction of allocating energy aid to deal with the hardships of the people most affected by these effects of the war.

It seems to me – looking to the future while also keeping our eyes sharply focused on today – that we must, on the one hand, propose forms of guaranteed income to counter the harshness and tragedy of this war, and on the other, continue that labor liberation movement which is one of the most beautiful, exciting, and promising things that have happened in recent years and which must be activated and materially supported.

**Giairo Daghini:** Thank you very much Christian. Now let's hear Toni Negri on these aspects.

**Toni Negri:** I'll try to explain how I feel about this war. First of all, I didn't expect it. And I think that many friends with whom I addressed the subject did not expect it, even though we were attentively observing what was happening in the field of globalization. This is in some ways the latest job we invented for ourselves, that of looking at how the world is going in relation to our past and the ideas we had about our future. In the debate on the state of globalization we had all understood that we are, as Christian said, in an interregnum. The new has not yet dawned and the dead suffocates, chokes us. This is in some respects the feeling I have in relation to this war, something I don't quite understand.

I hear about many doubts to which I would like to draw your attention. A few months ago, on the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Empire*, we published an article in *New Left Review*, "Twenty Years after Empire", in which we discussed the idea that globalization was something that was over. It seems to me that Christian agrees. But also that globalization was renewing itself under certain conditions. We wrote that we believed this globalized world looked like a Russian doll: two spheres one on top of the other, one inside the other. One sphere is the sphere of pipes, of relations, of networks, and the other is the sphere, the network of political relations. These two networks, one on top of the other, often would rotate in a contradictory manner. The balance that had been reached at the triumphant height of globalization was not to last. These two levels were offset. This is also how this war should be read, by asking ourselves how these two different networks, one made of pipes and the other of political relations, bring about grotesque contradictions. There is war, but oil continues to pass through Ukraine and beyond, and war is supported by the payment of this oil that is still circulating through the enemy's territory. And I am told that the Russians are even paying the cost of oil passing through Ukraine. We are faced with a situation which sees the coexistence of two completely different orders. On the one hand we have an order of communication, of pipes, a republic of pipes pervading the whole world, all the seas, and on the other hand a political scenario of war. And all this, of course, is set against the large background we are all aware of, that of the attenuation of American international hegemony and the increasingly imposing presence of the Chinese project.

So what is the meaning of Putin's attack? Why did Putin start this war? Why did he want to break this relationship of pipes, based on a continuous nearing towards establishing a relationship with Russia, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet period? For some western social and political strata, the relationship with Russia was considered fixed. The whole situation linked to the second canal in the Baltic Sea was evidently linked to a continuity of this relationship, which had been founded not on a solid alliance but rather on precise terms of coexistence. These pipes even generated a wave of friendship. In France, it is fun to see how everyone of the former presidents has a role in some Russian conglomerate. Why did Putin want to break this relationship? A first logical solution would be to consider taking him seriously. He said that he wanted to make this break because he considers it a continuous provocation to have NATO closer to the Russian borders. This provocation would be contrary to the agreements from

Gorbachev onwards, in particular the missile agreements of the 1980s and 1990s, therefore placing the Russian security structure in great danger. This operation was an operation to block this advance of NATO on its borders. This is reasonable from a European point of view. Without resorting to conspiracy, it is reasonable that in American politics, European unity is seen as something troublesome. European unity was only admitted as subject to NATO, as European reunification within a project of opposition to communism. The enlargement and strengthening of NATO after the end of the Soviet bloc was something deeply connected to what was the general line of European policies. In fact, at the beginning of 2021 Macron, who is certainly not a subversive, said that the brain of NATO was completely sterile and finished. There was a real problem of arming Europe outside NATO, which created a rupture. From this point of view, NATO's revitalization on the eastern front seems to meet Putin's accusations against it. I think this is an aspect we must keep in mind, asking ourselves to what extent in Putin's strategy is a response to a clear American pressure on all its borders.

However, even considering this aspect, Putin's reaction is completely illogical. It is completely irrational. This war has been presented in imperial terms. He tried to solve with a knife the paradoxical situation of this war about pipes where gas continues to flow while cities are destroyed and attacked. This war has become one of the most hateful things one could see.

My condition prevents me from going to see what is happening in person, something I would gladly do, therefore I must stay at home and let the television be my source of information. If there's one thing that drives me crazy that is turning on the television and watching the news about this war. Because obviously they have to highlight the horrible things that are happening. And I'm old enough to remember what war is, I remember it myself, I was ten years old in 1943. I know what war is. It makes my hair stand on end and I feel incredibly sorry. But it's hateful to hear the propaganda that's on television. It's stupid, so many Russian generals are being killed. What an army indeed, with generals in the front line! Something that didn't even occur in Napoleon's day! What scares me most is not the overabundance of information of this boorish propaganda, only about dying children and bombed hospitals...

But it is not only this that offends me. It is the propaganda venom instilled in these messages which could become further elements of war. Think, for example, of that message that is constantly stated, that NATO will intervene only if chemical weapons are used. All I'm waiting for is to turn on the television one evening and hear that chemical weapons have been used by the Russians, because this is what happened in Iraq, in Syria. This is an announcement that is a foreshadowing, a propaganda that has now become performative propaganda. That makes me so cross, because I am sure that message is hiding the truth. It's a horrible conflict in which we all participate, we all suffer, but we have to keep asking ourselves why, which is hard to understand when this truth is continually covered by performative statements.

And this brings us to the clearly increasingly serious problem of what solution can be found to this war. Europe is pushing to establish peace – Draghi too, we must give him credit for that. But also the German and the French are discussing a non-nuclear neutralization of Ukraine and an agreement to settle the situation of the occupied areas, Crimea and the territories of the Don Basin. But this solution could only work on the resumption of that initial European project, i.e. the relative decline of the American presence, of the power of the dollar, a point on which Christian still has many doubts, I believe.

I think however that here we might be going towards an entrenched war on Ukrainian soil, a kind of Afghanistan, with the aim of exhausting the residual Russian military force in a long war of position. I have the impression that this is the line NATO intends to take. It is a line that is contrary to all the democratic countries of Europe. It is truly absurd, dangerous, lethal; it means having war in your home for an indefinite number of years, exactly as in Afghanistan, exactly as in Syria. We are probably facing a scenario of this kind, and this is extremely dangerous.

Faced with this devastating prospect, I am, of course, totally against the idea of sending weapons. I think what needs to be done is to press on to the very end to reopen a peace movement. Sending in weapons would mean sinking into this war even further, keeping it alive beyond all the limits of the rising nationalisms that Giairo already denounced as dangerous. Invoking the idea of a



homeland makes me sick to my stomach and seeing it reborn today with such violence makes me even more scared, because this open war risks bringing about for us Europeans an end to the European dream in which Europe could become the “railway turntable” in the relations between peoples. An incongruous war, therefore, and a modification of the global order which Christian mentioned. I am not as knowledgeable as he is about these matters, but this territorialization of currencies, this definitive break with the dollar, seems something very advanced. Another element that another of our comrades, Sandro Mezzadra, insisted on is to look at what is happening on a global level, where three quarters of Africa abstained from the UN vote, where out of the ten most populous countries in the world only one, America, opted for war, while the others abstained or voted against. The anti-NATO, anti-World NATO model, the model of action that seeks to block American expansionism is still very strong, and after the interregnum this aspect will undoubtedly open up to a profoundly different modal configuration. Being on the right side today means fighting for peace. It means fighting for peace and recovering those battles for work, for freedom. In the end, when you see how information works today, you cannot fail to understand the centrality of freedom of expression. These issues must also be taken up more deeply in the struggle that we must wage today. A struggle that sees the enemy on both sides of the war, but which also sees how to build a new world, beyond this enmity.

**Annie Ratti:** Thank you all for your contributions. We will now open the debate taking questions from the audience.

**Question from the audience:** About Negri’s last words, I wanted to ask you about the role of two countries – Turkey and Israel – which are offering to act as great mediators. This seems very strange to me and I would like to hear your opinion.

**Toni Negri:** Turkey and Israel are the collateral margins of NATO. Even though Israel is not part of NATO, it is somehow at the center of it. Both countries are obviously linked to the new post-war perspective. Keep in mind that Saudi Arabia is negotiating with China for oil on the basis of non-dollar payments. The whole balance of the Middle East area in which Turkey and Israel are well placed is linked to this open problem of Russian use of energy sources, but also to the food market problems that are linked to the Ukrainian black soil, the Don and Volga areas. Israel and Turkey are making an argument that is exactly what we are making too. Of course we are not talking directly about class struggle, but we are also talking about class struggle. That is how the United States are moving. Don’t you think that behind all this is the scar of what happened in the last two years, before and during the Covid-19 emergency? The revolt of black people, the change in the class struggle, the pressure for change that exists in that country? War is scary for us. War is not scary for those who are in power. Those who are in power are only afraid of those who are below. And that’s what determines war. War is a fear that is thrown at us by those who are afraid of us when we rebel. This is what is happening for example in the United States, where there is certainly a great internal crisis of legitimacy of power, a power that is organized in a capitalist way, as you know perfectly well.

This of course does not justify Putin, who has even bigger problems: not only the internal revolt of the workers’ class, but a possible and definitive disintegration of the Russian empire, which has emerged from a neo-feudalism that was built around Yeltsin during the post-Soviet interregnum. There are these problems behind the fact that Israel and Turkey are trying to end this war. Because they know that we are communicating vessels. Globalization is unfortunately there, although I agree with Christian when he said that despite everything this war may also have a positive outcome.

**Giairo Daghini:** Regarding Israel, Bennett is working hard with the Emirates of the Gulf because they are also discussing with the United States whether to remove or resume the agreement with Iran. Given the problems of getting oil from Russia and the shortage that will be created, they are trying to reopen a relationship with Iran. The problem is how to control it.

**Christian Marazzi:** I was about to say the same thing: the Western bloc is interested in relaunching oil production and export from Iran, and this is not acceptable for Israel. So I don't think Israel can play a mediating role at all, at least at this stage. The same can be said of Turkey in its relationship with Libya, which is a potential alternative source of energy raw materials, should the strategy of decoupling from dependence on Russia succeed.

It is also true that it is very difficult to come up with ideas that are definitive. We have to ask ourselves, using the image of pipes used by Toni, how effective can these sanctions that we are talking about be. With regard to Iran, the sanctions that have been going on for years have not caused anything at all from a money-trafficking point of view. After 2014, sanctions less heavy than those that have been put in place in recent weeks have not prevented weapons from being brought in. The only initiative that might be a problem for Russia is the one regarding currency reserves held by the Russian central bank. Yet, we must not forget that the mafia and all the largest criminal organizations have always found other systems of payment, a parallel finance perfectly coexisting with non-criminal finance.

Regarding what Toni said about the UN vote: the figures are impressive: 141 countries out of 193 voted in favor of sanctions, but those against count for more than half of the world's population. We are actually talking from the point of view of this half and we know absolutely nothing about what is happening in the other half. We need to have the humility to start studying and understanding what they think. In my opinion, the other half of the world doesn't give a damn about what's going on in Ukraine. Either because they are far away or because they have other priorities.

This is a serious problem that complicates the picture and requires us to adopt a humbler approach. I say that we have to throw ourselves into the things we know, and what we know is that we have to fight for life, we have to fight for freedom, for peace, for love. And do it in a demographic geography that is changing.

More than 20,000 refugees are arriving in Switzerland. We can't keep thinking that things are taken for granted when we have a war just a few kilometers away. It seems to me that the fight in the framework of migration has once again become a matter of urgency.

**Giairo Daghini:** This is also the question of weapons and rearmament. The accumulation operation that has been going on for years entails a great danger, that a series of conflicts, when they turn into a war, may spread to their whole relation network and lead to a situation of expanding war. The debate that has emerged from the UN vote, about the fact that half the world's population did not vote for sanctions and is not interested in what is happening, means that a large part of the world's population is not interested in expanding this war. Yet, today we find ourselves in the process of building an armed Europe (which at the moment appears to be the predominant line of action) and with diplomats who appear incapable of imposing themselves on this war. I have the impression that some of the contenders don't really want to end it: shatter belts continue to appear and Europe will need to become even more powerful.

Our goal therefore must be finding a way to set up a movement, a grassroots diplomacy, movements operating within the various democracies, expressing themselves in the streets, which today takes on the form of those deserting the war in Ukraine and Russia. Our goal today should be to succeed in making war-withdrawal an integral part of society's behavior, while at present war is continuously presented to us by all the state and institutional organizations we find ourselves in. Do you realize that this concerns us? It concerns us in this *jetzt zeit*, in this time of now, in which every action we take will count or not in the desertion of the war. This is the enormous problem we have: diplomacy, grassroots politics. The democracies that we have built today are very ambiguous regarding the question of war, the expansion of war, as opposed to the implosion of this possibility. This desertion of war is not just an image that we can cast aside after having passionately proclaimed it. This is our duty at this moment, this we must build in this contrast. I believe we should not only make stances and demonstrations to stop sending arms, but to support the unsustainability and the impossibility of the expansion of this war. This is something we must build within the societies we live in. It must become a practice. This is a novelty that this war brings us, a new history that we must create.

**Question from the audience:** Can the situation of war in Ukraine, connected to the expansion of far-right positions throughout Eastern Europe, lead to the strengthening of far-right-wing institutions in countries such as Hungary for example?

**Christian Marazzi:** My impression is rather that in the near future we will witness the development of militia fighting. That's why I'm also against sending weapons. I was struck, for example, when I heard the director of the Italian Red Cross say that the problem of getting medical supplies to support and care for civilians is not due to the two armies, but to the militia, private armed groups effectively opposing and boycotting this service. This may be just one example, but my impression is that this deflagration will lead to a kind of creeping civil war, in which new far-right militias will play an important role. We should consider that this parceling out of militarization could be one of the outcomes of this war.

**Toni Negri:** I could not agree more.