

Mediterranean dockworkers prepare International Day of Protest against escalating global war

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Dock and port workers across the Mediterranean and beyond are planning an International Day of Protest on February 6, titled “Dockworkers don’t work for war.” The initiative involves unions from Greece (Enedep), Spain’s Basque Country (LAB), Turkey (Liman-Is), Morocco (ODT) and Italy (USB), calls for actions in more than 20 major Mediterranean ports, with recent support in German ports and emerging mobilizations in the United States.

The protest explicitly opposes the use of port infrastructure and workers for military purposes, including the handling of arms shipments. Workers frame their mobilization as part of broader opposition to militarism, connecting war to wage suppression, deteriorating working conditions and the erosion of labor rights. The diversion of financial resources to the “war economy” involves slashing living standards and public services, imposing longer working hours, and denying recognition of physically demanding labor for pension purposes.

Dockworkers are making a statement: they oppose war abroad and what flows from it, social counterrevolution at home. Their protest coincides with the opening of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics in Italy, where the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been met with protests against deportations, state violence and the murderous police agency’s presence in Italy.

These demonstrations follow ICE’s murder of Renee Nicole Good and ICU nurse Alex Petti in Minneapolis, state crimes that triggered mass protests across the United States and intensified opposition to Trump’s escalating war against the American working class. Demonstrators rallied in Milan on Saturday, chanting “ICE out” and “ICE no grazie” (ICE no thanks), showing their solidarity

with communities in Minnesota and other U.S. states targeted by ICE.

This international mobilization unfolds amid deepening global war and the disintegration of the postwar imperialist order. The growing rupture between the United States and the European Union reflects deep conflict between rival sections of the global ruling class over markets, resources and strategic influence. Trade coercion, military threats and diplomatic confrontations such as the US-EU conflict over Greenland are symptoms of this systemic breakdown.

The European imperialist powers find themselves both dependent on and in competition with US imperialism. Economic confrontation has intensified alongside territorial disputes, as US tariff threats led the EU to consider retaliatory measures, including financial countermeasures and use of the Anti-Coercion Instrument. Politically and militarily, the rupture is driving European rearmament and debates over strategic autonomy, as the European imperialist powers still depend upon US military support to wage their war against Russia in Ukraine.

This global crisis of capitalism poses great political tasks to the workers. The growing opposition to war in the working class that has pressed the union leaderships into scheduling the February 6 action points to deep-rooted developments in the working class. Among workers and youth, there is a growing, instinctive search for ways to build an internationalist, class-based struggle against a social order that is tobogganing towards catastrophe.

The International Day of Protest on February 6 represents an important development, but it poses a decisive political task that goes beyond symbolic opposition to war. Critical historical lessons must be drawn, in particular from the experience of three years of

mass protests against the Gaza genocide. Workers cannot halt genocide, fascism and war while remaining tethered to national bureaucracies who work politically within the framework of the capitalist nation-state system.

Many of the unions involved in the February 6 action—particularly those in Italy, Greece, and Spain—emerge from a Stalinist tradition. Without explicitly rejecting internationalism in words, they reject it in practice. Instead of building a unified struggle of the global working class, they advocate “international coordination” between national union bureaucracies, each of which attempts to influence supposedly “progressive” politicians in their own capitalist national-state machine.

Antiwar sentiment among workers participating in the February 6 action highlights the objective basis for socialist internationalism: the shared interest of workers across borders in stopping war and dictatorship, and opposing “their own” capitalist oligarchies at home. The syndicalist perspective of unions controlling the February 6 action does not, however, tend in this direction. It presents workers opposed to war with no perspective beyond using the strike to build parliamentary pressure, via moral appeals to national or municipal officials.

The involvement of figures like US Amazon Labor Union founder Chris Smalls in the February 6 protest illustrates this point. Smalls is known for founding the Amazon Labor Union and a successful vote at JFK8. Yet within months, the ALU displayed tendencies common to other unions: bureaucratic disputes and reliance on the official union bureaucracies and the Democratic Party, which under President Joe Biden armed and backed the Gaza genocide.

Another example is provided by Italy’s *Collettivo Autonomo Lavoratori Portuali* (CALP), affiliated with the USB and at the forefront of industrial action in recent months. In an open letter to the Genoa city council, CALP denounced war, arms trafficking and the transformation of ports into logistics hubs for mass murder. This reflected widespread antiwar sentiment in the working class, amid the genocide in Gaza and war in Ukraine.

Yet the letter also appealed to local authorities integrated into the capitalist state and NATO alliance to exercise “oversight” of the port. Such emphasis on national limits, municipal oversight or coordination through existing institutions blocks an independent, cross-border struggle for working-class power which is the only way to stop imperialist war and genocide.

This flows from the politics of the USB leadership. The USB called its October 2025 “We don’t work for war”

protest alongside Rifondazione Comunista—a party built in 1991 by Stalinist factions of the Italian Communist Party, anarcho-syndicalist forces, and Pabloite descendants of renegades from Trotskyism. Rifondazione is a longstanding ally of Italian capitalist parties. It deeply discredited itself in 2007, when Rifondazione legislators cast key votes to pass pension cuts and fund NATO war in Afghanistan.

Growing mass demonstrations and calls for a general international strike indicate that hostility to war resonates deeply among workers. However, this sentiment can only become a material force if it is consciously organized and politically clarified—in particular, on the necessity of left-wing opposition to pro-imperialist parties of the affluent middle class like Rifondazione.

It is urgently necessary to build rank-and-file committees, democratically controlled by workers themselves and united across national borders. Such committees must be independent of union bureaucracies, capitalist parties and governments, and unified in the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The construction of the IWA-RFC provides the organizational foundation for a unified international movement of the working class against imperialism, genocide, and far-right dictatorship.

Such a movement can only be built in a political war against capitalist police states led not only by fascist politicians like Trump or Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, but also by forces like the Socialist Party-Sumar coalition in Spain. This underscores the decisive importance of the International Committee of the Fourth International’s (ICFI) decades-long defense of Trotskyism against both Pabloism and Stalinism.

Overcoming the political obstacle presented by such forces to the international unification of the working class in struggle requires building a political movement fighting for the perspective of Trotskyism, an international struggle to transfer power to working people and build socialism.



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