Support the international dockworkers' action! Build a European general strike against war and austerity!

Socialist Equality Parties in Europe
29 October 2026

The Socialist Equality Parties in Europe welcome and support the international day of action by dock and port workers on Friday, October 30, against war, genocide and militarisation. Under the slogan "Dockers do not work for war," workers are demonstrating their determination to oppose the war policies of their governments and use their collective strength to stop them.

The significance of this action extends far beyond the ports. Amid an eruption of strikes and mass protests across Europe, it marks the growing intervention of the working class into the struggle against war, austerity and state repression. It demonstrates the potential for an internationally coordinated movement against the capitalist governments and their war policies.

According to the organisers, workers at 113 ports in 22 countries and regions across five continents are taking part in strikes, demonstrations or solidarity actions. From Marseille, Genoa and Piraeus to Hamburg, Tangier, Mumbai and Oakland, workers are uniting across national borders.

They oppose the genocide and oppression of the Palestinians, the US-Israeli war against Iran and the use of ports to transport military equipment and troops. They reject rearmament and demand that public resources be devoted to social needs, higher wages, secure jobs and shorter working hours, rather than the destruction of jobs through automation.

These demands express the inseparable connection between war and the assault on workers' living standards. The governments spending hundreds of billions on armaments are simultaneously cutting public services, attacking wages and preparing their populations for war.

The action, initiated by unions in Greece, the Basque Country, Turkey, Morocco, Italy and France, follows an earlier mobilisation on February 6 and has expanded substantially. Support has also been announced by ver.di in Hamburg, ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco and Oakland and organisations elsewhere.

Ports are vital arteries of global production and military supply chains. Dockworkers occupy a strategically important position, and their coordinated action points to the enormous power of the international working class to disrupt the machinery of war. This power must now be consciously organised and extended.

From protests towards the preparation of a European general strike

Friday's action takes place amid an extraordinary growth of class struggle. In France, hundreds of thousands of workers and young people have demonstrated against austerity and repression, despite mass arrests and police violence. A nationwide strike is planned for November 5. In Italy, USB has called a general strike for October 30, extending the mobilisation beyond the ports. Greek dockworkers are acting alongside metalworkers fighting over wages and conditions, following strikes and protests by teachers and other public-sector workers.

Protests have also erupted in Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Serbia, Albania and elsewhere. In Germany, tens of thousands of school and university students and young workers are preparing to demonstrate on Saturday against austerity, compulsory military service and government policy.

The protest movements among young people are intersecting with struggles by workers. Opposition to war, social cuts and authoritarianism is beginning to coalesce into a wider movement. The dockworkers' international action is a significant expression of this development.

But it cannot be confined to a one-day protest. It must become the starting point for sustained, coordinated strike action involving railway, transport, logistics and industrial workers, teachers, healthcare workers and other sections of the working class.

The objective situation poses the need for a **European general strike against war, austerity and state repression**. Such a movement would raise the fundamental political question: Who is to determine the future of society—the financial oligarchy and its governments, or the working class that produces society's wealth?

No struggle against war without opposing NATO's war against Russia

Developing this movement requires political clarity about the wars being waged and prepared. The United States and Israel are preparing another offensive against Iran, while the European powers are intensifying the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, bringing a direct conflict between nuclear-armed powers ever closer.

European governments are expanding their armies, military production and preparations for war. Germany, France and the other major powers regard domination of Ukraine and the strategic

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weakening of Russia as central to their imperialist interests.

The working class cannot fight an abstract "militarism" while evading these actual wars. Above all, it must confront the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine, the central axis of European rearmament and military escalation.

Here the political limitations of the organisers become apparent. Their joint declaration does not even mention Ukraine. A statement by the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), with which several participating unions are associated, refers to the war only in passing.

This omission is not incidental. The major European union bureaucracies, including Germany's ver.di, support NATO's war policy in Ukraine and the associated military buildup. Appeals to defend Ukrainian sovereignty and democracy provide a justification for the expansion of arms production and the transformation of Europe into a war economy.

Member unions of the WFTU like Italy's USB, rooted in the Stalinist tradition, oppose NATO arms deliveries and call for diplomacy between the capitalist parties. The French CGT, for its part, combines calls with negotiations with denunciations of Russia and solidarity campaigns for Ukraine. The efforts to maintain alliances with pro-war union bureaucracies inevitably lead to suppressing the central question of European militarism.

This is a political dead end. The danger of world war cannot be averted by avoiding the NATO-Russia conflict or appealing for negotiations between imperialist governments and the reactionary Putin regime, which represents the Russian capitalist oligarchy. It requires the independent mobilisation of the international working class against all capitalist governments, on a socialist and internationalist programme.

Break with the union bureaucracies and pseudo-left

The ruling class's response to mass protest underlines the scale of the political struggle. In France, more than 10,000 people have been arrested amid curfews, bans and police violence, while the political establishment promotes the fascist National Rally and threatens action against "left-wing extremism." In Italy, the Meloni government has repressed demonstrations and denounced pro-Palestinian activists. In Germany, politicians, police and media are smearing Saturday's youth protests as potentially violent before they even take place.

War and austerity are being imposed through increasingly authoritarian methods. Defeating them requires a movement that challenges the capitalist governments.

Yet union bureaucracies and pseudo-left organisations seek to confine the struggles to limited protests and negotiations with those governments. In France, the CGT and other confederations seek to channel mass opposition into isolated strikes and talks with President Macron. Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise seeks to redirect it into the institutions of the bourgeois republic. This is the same orientation that led the struggle against pension cuts in 2023 into defeat.

The obstacle is not simply the reluctance of union officials to organise longer strikes. Their political orientation is to preserve their relationship with the capitalist state and prevent the working class from emerging as an independent political force. The fight to expand the dockworkers' action therefore requires a rebellion against the authority of these bureaucracies and their pseudo-left defenders.

Build rank-and-file committees! Fight for socialism!

The Socialist Equality Parties call for independent, democratically controlled rank-and-file action committees in ports, factories, transport, schools, universities and working-class neighbourhoods. These committees must formulate workers' demands, organise resistance to repression, and coordinate strikes independently of the union apparatuses and capitalist parties.

Their immediate task is to link the dockworkers with railway workers, truck drivers, seafarers, industrial workers and all those involved in military production and transportation, while uniting with young people resisting conscription, austerity and police violence.

This coordination must cross every national border. The ruling elites coordinate their economic attacks, rearmament and repression internationally; workers must answer with their own international organisation. The **International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC)**, initiated by the International Committee of the Fourth International, provides the framework for this struggle.

The aim must be the preparation of a sustained European general strike, challenging the rule of the capitalist oligarchy and raising the question of workers taking political power. This is more than a demand for broader industrial action. War, poverty, social inequality and fascism cannot be defeated within the framework of capitalism.

The resources squandered on war must be directed to social needs. The major banks, arms corporations and strategic industries must be placed under public ownership and democratic workers' control. Against the capitalist European Union, we fight for the **United Socialist States of Europe**, as part of a world socialist federation.

This requires the building of revolutionary socialist parties in the working class. The Socialist Equality Parties, sections of the ICFI, fight to develop this leadership and transform the growing resistance expressed in the dockworkers' action into a united political offensive of the international working class against capitalism, war and dictatorship.

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