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Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici
Italy 90 years ago: World War I ends
Italy today: mourning not celebrating
4 November 2008

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4 November 2008

90 years ago in Villa Giusti, Austria surrendered to Italy. Victory! For Italy, World War I was over!

But it was a war that the workers did not want and was imposed on them with force by the Italian State.

Does anybody nowadays remember that in 1915 in Milan, Rome, Turin and other towns there were mass demonstrations against the war? That in Turin, 100,000 striking workers clashed with police and troops in a struggle that lasted two days?

It was clear that the workers did not want to be cannon-fodder. They had no intention of paying for the cost of a war imposed by the bourgeoisie, the industrialists and the upper echelons of the army.

And we are unlikely to be reminded over the next few days that during the war there were a million trials for desertion, that whole battalions were brutally decimated, or that there were 4,000 arrests during anti-war demonstrations.

Who remembers now that in Turin in 1917 the people rose up once again for 7 days in protest against rising prices, for bread and for peace?

Italy today hypocritically celebrates its “victory”. But it was a victory paid for with 680,000 deaths, 2 million wounded, mutilated and imprisoned, all workers sent to the slaughter against other workers from other countries — 15 million workers died altogether. Proletarians who were told that they were fighting for their fatherland. Tricked. The real enemies were their leaders, who privately planned the massacre in their headquarters far from the trenches.

The Italian State today celebrates the tragedy with speeches, commemorations, military parades, visits to war cemeteries, eulogies to the bravery of Italian soldiers who died for the fatherland, special lessons in schools, and the order from Defence Minister La Russa to fly the Italian flag (which already flies outside all public buildings)!

But the moving words and praise for heroism from the men in government and the armed forces will not trick us: the fatherland and nationalism are inventions used to put workers from one country against those of another, to legitimize armies with which they control the territory and defend the economic interests of imperialism wherever destruction is needed, be it Iraq or Afghanistan, the Caucasus or Tibet, Africa or Lebanon and Palestine, producing millions of refugees, misery and ruin, unemployment and emigration.

90 years later, let 4 November be a day for repudiating war, for anti-militarism and non-violence between peoples, for ceasefires and the de-militarization of all war zones, for the withdrawal of the Italian army and all armies from fake peace-keeping missions.

4 November 2008, let the flags fly at half mast, let us mourn the martyrs of the barbarities of capitalism, nationalism and militarism.

Peace and solidarity between the workers of the whole world, international struggle against exploitation and poverty!