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# The Spectacularization of War, When Tragedy Attracts an Audience for Propaganda Purposes

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## Abstract

The slogan that echoes in all the press releases and declarations of governments around the world in this historical moment is: let's organize ourselves for an effective military defense, to defend our freedom and democracy. All belligerents identify the nations with which they are in conflict as "their enemy", in a mutual accusation that marks the other party with infamy and responsibility for the aggression suffered.

Thus, they are all right and have the legitimacy to fight and justify the reason for the war, and free their consciences from the weight of guilt for the destruction caused to human lives and entire countries.

For many centuries the history of peoples has periodically been stained with the blood of human lives which, with contemptuous cynicism, are sacrificed for reasons of state, either for the defense of freedom, or by an occasional enemy, while at home, that same freedom that it wants to defend itself from the enemy, it is always repressed and denied.

Thus, the history that is studied in schools is the history of the wars of liberation of the homeland, of sacrifice and heroism of the people, and is narrated with rhetoric inspired by the values of the defense of sacred borders. God, Homeland and Family are the supreme values contained in the slogans that accompany every political program and justify all wars.

And it is in the name of these values that the most atrocious mass crimes are committed, and the criminal trafficking of arms and human lives is hidden. And it is in the name of these values that the death and destruction of entire populations is represented in the spectacle of state lies.

This manuscript aims to denounce the mystified representation of the systematic violence that the reasons and interests of the state impose on us and to underline the impossibility, for citizens of good will all over the world, to exercise minimal decision-making power regarding the warlike conduct of their own governments.

**Keywords:** War, War industry, Interventionist politics, War economy

## Introduction

*"Our global culture of war means guaranteed profits for the arms industry"*

Paul Rogers ; OPEN DEMOCRACY, 23 June 2023

While conflicts around the world claim victims and destroy entire cities, talk shows and mass media are narrating the outcomes of

individual battles and the geopolitical consequences that wars will produce on the international political scene.

Regardless of the disasters and the immense tragedy that takes place in the territories destroyed by war and on the massacre of defenseless peoples, geopolitical experts and high-ranking intellectuals recount and comment on the tragedies and horrors of wars in



the surreal debate of the political consequences deriving from the outcomes of war events.

Every evening the regime information updates the list of deaths, destroyed buildings and occupied territories that accumulate on the two main fronts of the conflict: Ukraine and Palestine, remaining silent on the over 100 conflicts that bloodied the planet every month.

The narrative that the mass media propose to us occurs without evident emotional participation of the speakers as if they were discussing the cold figures of the gross domestic product, the increase in employment, the GDP, the inflation or the spread.

It is the consequence of the evolution of advanced societies which have degenerated into consumer societies where all events of social, political and economic importance are transformed into entertainment. In this stage there is no information on the true meaning of the events, but it is functional to convey the distorted story of the facts and hide the injustices and corruption that are the foundations of the current sociopolitical systems. The show is the support vehicle for advertising consumer goods, from cars to detergents to food, mixing misinformation and marketing, in a perverse mechanism that crushes the critical spirit of unaware spectators.

Thus, the spectacle of the extermination in progress attracts an audience and captures the attention of uncritical spectators, and

only serves to promote, between one obvious political discussion and another, the insistent commercials on consumer goods to be offered to the most widespread consumerism. unbridled.

It seems that by now we have all become accustomed with cold cynicism to violence and mass destruction, the only timid condemnation expressed in the street demonstrations, immediately repressed by democratic regimes, is aimed at the ferocious tyrants who unleashed the war.

The various Putin, Netanyahu, Biden, Zelenskyy and companions, who are denounced by protest slogans as those responsible for the massacre and supporters of the wars, who incidentally, do not risk their lives but sacrifice those of the people, are in reality just the arm armed with the powerful lobbies of the war industry and the economic potentates of the investment banks.

In fact, it is these who decide and impose on governments all over the world the strategies and directions of the planned massacre for the sole purpose of increasing their profits and lucrative business exponentially.

If we objectively examine the figures allocated by various governments for armaments and the profits that the war industry derives from each war, we see that the profits grow in parallel with the growth of poverty, the number of deaths and the devastation produced in the territories involved in conflicts (Figures 1,2).

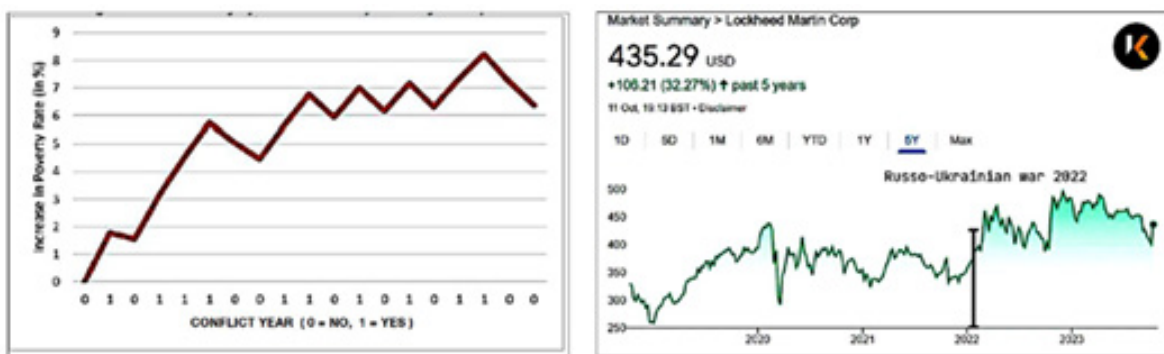


Figure 1: From: Hannes Mueller & Chanon Techasunthornwat; Conflict and Poverty, WORLD BAN GROUP; Poverty and Equity Global Practice, October 2020.

Note\*: Simulation of Dynamics in Poverty in a Conflict Trap. How To Profit From War



Figure 2: Comparison between the deaths caused by the war in Ukraine and Gaza and the profits generated by the war industry.

The expenditures allocated to armaments also give us the measure of the priorities that governments intend to assign to the economic resources that they should invest for the well-being of the nation. The primary cause at the origin of wars is always the same, the conquest of new territories, in particular those rich in mineral and oil deposits, or to economically support puppet governments subservient to the imperialistic aims of the superpowers. In the mass media, in a competition of mystification and distortion of reality, the false political, strategic and military version of the ongoing conflicts is narrated, to hide those truly responsible for the events of mass destruction, and the true causes of the war.

## The Actors and the “Reasons” of the Wars

The political and strategic reasons that are reported by the regime information to justify the planned massacres, and the massive use of weapons, are the defense of the freedom and democracy of the nations attacked militarily. This is false information that hides the true reasons that are at the origin of all wars and which we have outlined above.

Information on the true reasons for the wars can be found in the major publications of the independent international press, which report with objective documentation which power groups there are and how many nations profit from the arms trade. To cite the most authoritative sources, we report the partial list of international newspapers from which all the necessary documentation can be drawn (Table1).

<p><b>REUTERS</b>  <a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/who-are-israels-main-arms-suppliers">Who are Israel's main weapons suppliers and who has ...</a>  <a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/who-are-israels-main-arms-suppliers">https://www.reuters.com/world/who-are-israels-main-arms-suppliers</a>            May 10, 2024 — Unlike the U.S., Britain's government does not give arms directly to Israel but rather licenses companies to sell — often components into U.S. ...  <a href="#">Gaza war: Where does Israel get its weapons?</a></p> <p>■■■</p> <p><b>BBC</b>  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/world-middle-east-68737412">https://www.bbc.com/world-middle-east-68737412</a>            Apr 15, 2024 — Western governments are coming under growing pressure to halt arms sales to Israel over how it is waging the war against Hamas in the Gaza ...  <a href="#">Which countries supply Israel's military with weapons, arms ...</a></p> <p><b>wp</b>  <b>The Washington Post</b>  <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/12/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/12/</a>            Apr 12, 2024 — The United States and Germany — which supply the vast majority of Israel's imported arms — say the transfers are essential to support Israel's ...  <a href="#">Which countries supply Israel with arms and why is Biden ...</a></p> <p><b>G</b>  <b>The Guardian</b>  <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/apr/us-israel-weapons">https://www.theguardian.com/apr/us-israel-weapons</a>            Apr 10, 2024 — Others are believed to include Britain, Italy and Australia — although Penny Wong, the Australian foreign affairs minister, has said her country ...  <a href="#">Ukraine weapons: What arms are being supplied and why ...</a></p> <p>■■■</p> <p><b>BBC</b>  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62002218">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62002218</a>            May 14, 2024 — The US and UK supplied thousands of Javelin and Nlaw anti-tank missiles. These were considered crucial in stopping the advance of Russian forces ...  <a href="#">List of military aid to Ukraine during the Russo-Ukrainian War</a></p> <p><b>W</b>  <b>Wikipedia</b>  <a href="#">Why Does the U.S. Arm Ukraine With Fanfare and Israel in ...</a></p> <p><b>T</b>  <b>The New York Times</b>  <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/opinion/us-ukraine-arms/">https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/opinion/us-ukraine-arms/</a>            Apr 27, 2024 — When the Biden administration ships arms to Ukraine, it pulls out the megaphones. It announces its shipments and hails its own efforts “to ...</p>
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Table 1: Partial list of newspapers that inform on the arms trade.

Followed by the declarations of denunciation from the pacifist organizations cited below:

“Beyond the diversion of resources, military spending is also harmful for other reasons. Militaries are among the greatest polluters in the world ; the manufacture and use of weapons creates unequal access to resources and further impedes poverty reduction initiatives; military investments directly fuel violence and armed conflict and perpetuate a system of violence and exploitation, in which security is associated with weapons and war.”(\*)

(\*) From: Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom; Comparing the arms trade and war profiteering

“The arms trade is one of the world’s most successful corporate enterprises. Not only has it created an economic system that grows regardless, it has normalized war and security responses to every social crisis” (\*\*)

(\*\*) From: Jordi Calvo Rufanges ; No business without enemies: war and the arms trade, STATE OF POWER 2021

“ SIPRI’s 2022 report identifies major arms exports from 2018-2022 to Ukraine from 29 countries. Ukraine was the fourteenth largest arms importer between 2018-22 (2.0% of global exports), however in 2022 alone it imported the third largest share of arms globally. SIPRI also identified Ukraine as the seventeenth largest major arms exporter from 2018-2022, accounting for 0.5% of major global weapons exports in that period.”

From: Arms Transfers to Ukraine, Forum on the Arms Trade

SIPRI: STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE The independent resource on global security, <https://www.sipri.org/>.

There is no trace of this information in the Italian press and mass media or in the shows that should inform public opinion. Which financial groups produce weapons and have a direct interest in provoking and fueling them? Below we report the data taken from Finanza Etica, (Figure 3).

Figure 3- By FINANZA ETICA, How Values-Based Banks Foster Peace in a World of Increasing Conflict

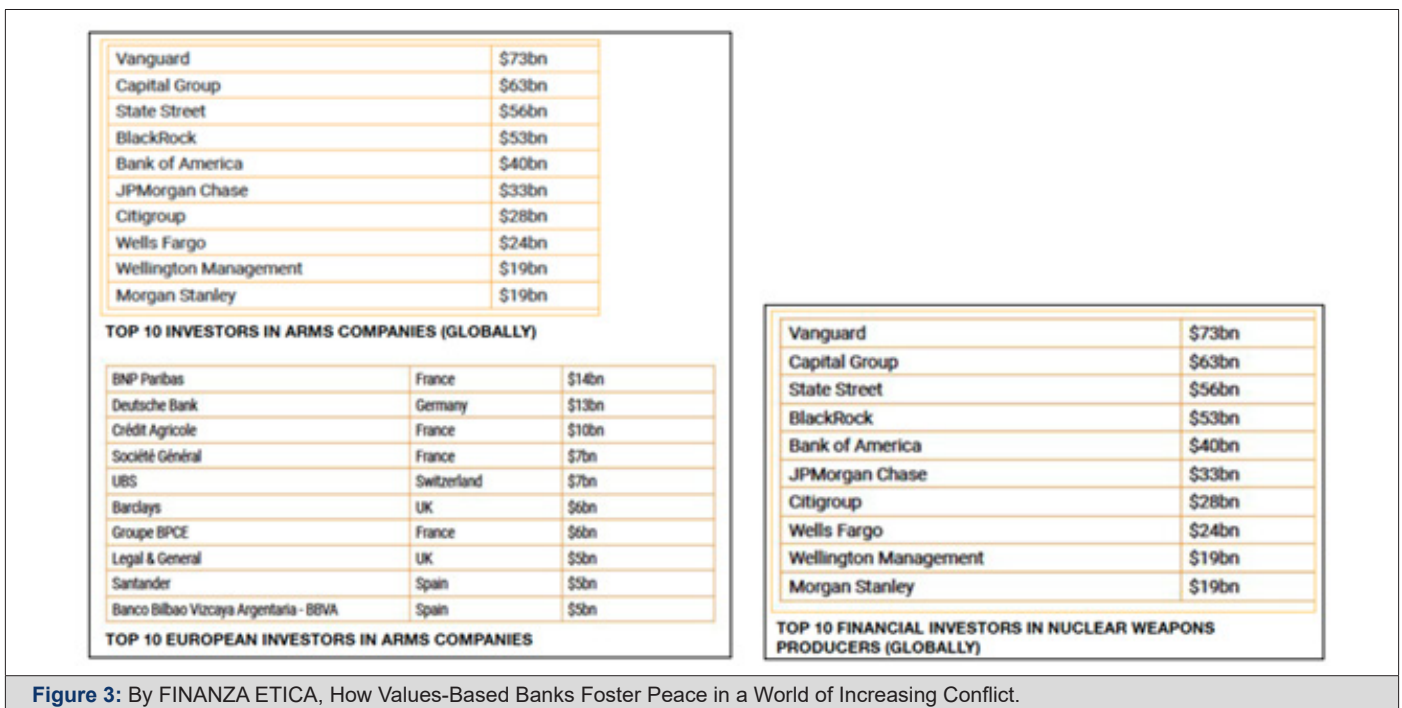


Figure 3: By FINANZA ETICA, How Values-Based Banks Foster Peace in a World of Increasing Conflict.

The statements reported above are contrasted by the irresponsible and criminal statements of the European Council, which clearly claims its institutional role and its fundamental political and economic objectives , set out in the following salient passages that we have extrapolated from the document.

European Council Press release of 19 March 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/03/19/if-we-want-peace-we-must-prepare-for-war/>.

which states (translated into all languages):

“If we want peace, we must prepare for war”

“Russia is a serious military threat to our European continent and to global security. If we do not get the EU’s response right, and do not give Ukraine enough support to stop Russia, we are next.

We must therefore be defense -ready and shift to a “war economy” mode. It is time to take responsibility for our own security. We can no longer count on others or be at the mercy of election cycles in the US or elsewhere.

We must strengthen our ability-both for Ukraine and for Europe-to defend the democratic world. A stronger Europe will also contribute to a stronger NATO alliance and enhance our collective defense.



While we can be proud of how far we have come, there is still much more that we can and must do.

.....

“We have also stepped up on the military front. Europe’s defense industry has increased its production capacity by 50% since the start of the war and we will double European ammunition production to over 2 million shells a year by the end of next year”.

.....

“For decades, Europe has not invested enough in our security and defense. Today we face the biggest security challenge since the Second World War, so we must build our defense readiness. This will take a radical and irreversible shift in our thinking, towards a strategic security mindset.”

.....

To close, we’d like to report the economic program, contained in the same document, which should have priority in the objectives of the European Union:

“Buy more together

We should aim to double what we buy from European industry by 2030. This will give more predictability to our companies. Multiyear contracts will also incentivize them to ramp up their production capacity. This will strengthen our defense industry, enhance defense readiness, and also create jobs, and growth across the EU.

Make access to financing easier

Investments in defense are expensive but without them we cannot increase our defense production. We must facilitate ways for the industry to access both public and private financing more easily. Issuing European defense bonds to raise money to buy material or invest in our industry could also be a powerful means to strengthen our technological, innovation and industrial base. We must also consider expanding the European Investment Bank’s mandate and adapt the lending policy to allow us to do more to support our European defense industry, ie by changing the definition of dual-use goods.”

These are explicit declarations in favor of war and an increasing commitment to military spending.

This document is the best support for the theses we support in this manuscript, and demonstrates that all state policy is focused on the war economy and in support of the war industry of which the banks are the major shareholders.

This document further demonstrates that the world’s sovereign people are totally deprived of any type of decision in favor of peace, and also empties the vote expressed during elections of any decision-making content.

It is precisely from certain totalitarian tendencies that contempt for the ruling class is generated among the working people, which can lead to the dangerous totalitarian regimes of the past, as

the famous jurist Gian Battista Vico expressed in the conception of the “Historical Courses and Appeals”.

These declarations are echoed by the shocking words used by Charles Michel, president of the European Council, in the letter of invitation sent to the 27 EU heads of state and government in view of the summit:

“This is the time for a real paradigm shift in relation to our security and defense. For decades, Europe has not invested enough in its security and defense. Now that we are facing the greatest security threat since the Second World War, the time has come to take radical and concrete measures to be ready to defend ourselves and put the EU economy on a ‘war footing.’”

Reproduced by: Gianni Borsa; Brussels: war council? Do not resign yourself to weapons, The People’s Defense of Friday 7 June 2024

And so, while the most enlightened minds and noble intellectuals discuss the events of the war being fought in different parts of the world while sitting on talk show seats, the atrocious dramatic reality of the peoples who suffer those wars takes place. The only effect that such learned disquisitions produce is the spectacularization of war and the false representation of reality and the criminal responsibilities of those who prosper and enrich on war.

Each of the informed experts on geopolitical issues who participates in similar shows has his own magic recipe and provides the correct interpretation of why and how war events originated and how they unfold.

In so-called advanced societies, the most evident phenomenon that is perpetually on stage, in all information and mass media, is the mystified spectacle of the socio-economic situation of nations, aimed at falsifying the truth and putting the critical spirit of people to sleep.

When it is no longer prosaically aimed at gathering the consensus of uncritical spectators for the political party that each speaker represents, or to understand their voting preferences during political elections.

The most hotly debated topic at the moment is the war in Ukraine and Palestine. The numerous other conflicts taking place in other parts of the world are forgotten (Figure 4).

It is disconcerting to witness the theses that the speakers support regarding the need to supply increasingly numerous and sophisticated weapons to resolve conflicts, remaining silent on seigniorage, a legacy of the

Atlantic treaties, signed at the end of the Second World War, which bind the old continent to the subordinate role of English speakers from overseas. The more moderate opt for diplomatic solutions.

This interventionist conception of armed conflicts justifies the escalation and perpetuation of wars, the sending of weapons on the one hand fuels and perpetuates the massacres of civilians and sol-

diers sent to the front, on the other it increases the profits of the war industry. Far from the theaters of war, when their own skin is not at stake, learned experts try their hand at surreal interpretations and proposals on what the developments of war events could be, without addressing the real reasons that are at their origin and fuel them. They discuss the epiphenomena and geopolitical consequences produced by conflicts without going into the real causes.

We never talk about the hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children and elderly, who do not promote wars, but suffer their disastrous effects. We never talk about the direct and indirect criminal responsibilities of the war industry, of the banks and business companies, which base their interests and their reason for existing and prospering on wars, and of the governments controlled by them which support their interventionist policies [1] (Figure 5).

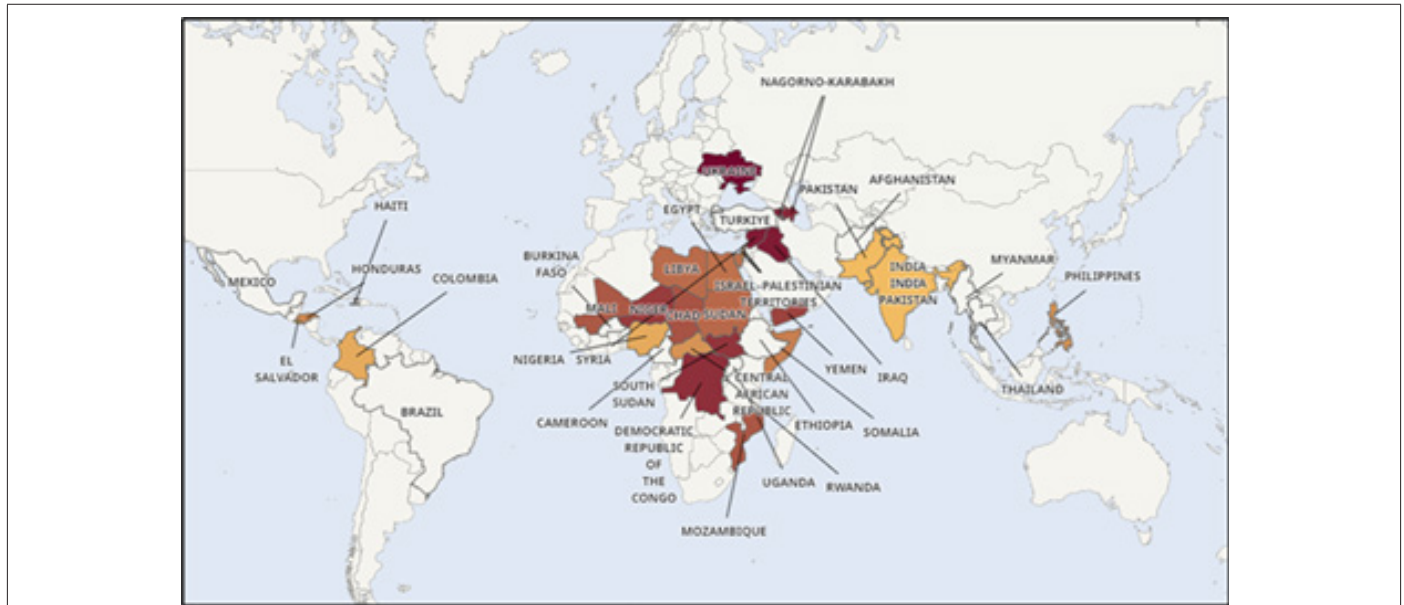


Figure 4: Areas of the world where armed conflicts are taking place.

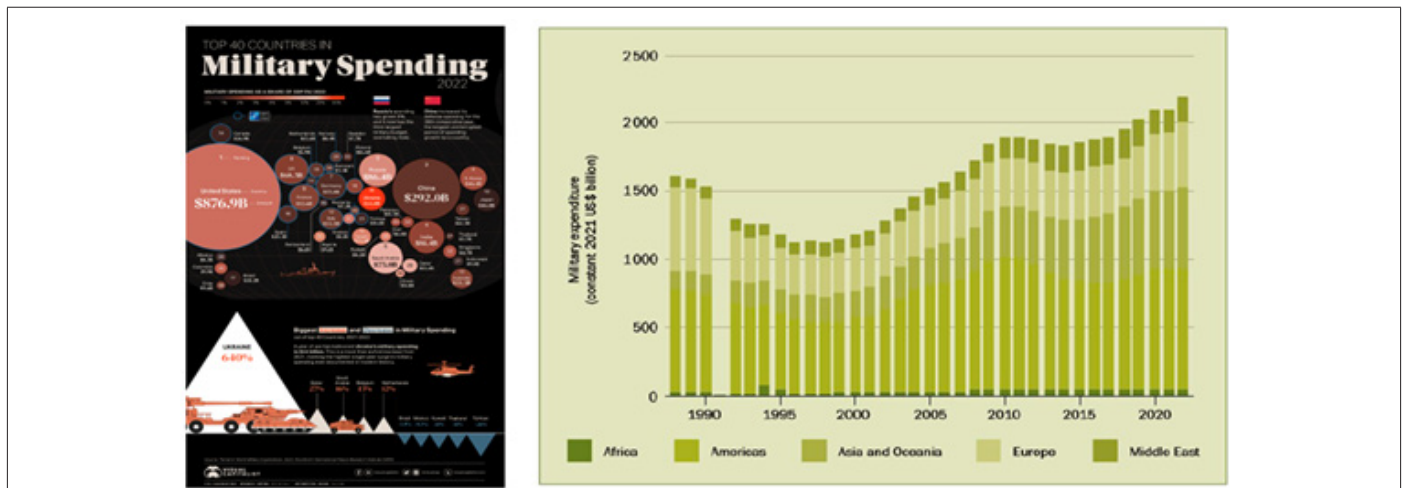


Figure 5: World military expenditure, by region, 1988–2022.

The stratospheric profits deriving from the arms trade and from the collection of debts generated for the reconstruction of the infrastructures that the nations devastated by wars will have to face are the real reasons behind all wars, while the corrupt politicians who have to justify and endorse the shady arms dealings are entitled to lavish benefits [2].

This is the truth that emerges from the final calculation of all wars: on the one hand, death and destruction for defenseless populations, on the other, exponential increase in wealth and power, for

the war industry, for banks and for politicians who benefit from the support offered to this criminal trade in death Figure 1.

From this dramatic picture emerges the state of awe and resignation of the populations intoxicated by the propaganda of sovereign regimes which make them believe that wars are fought to defend freedom and democracy. It is enough to objectively observe what the socio-economic condition of all peoples is (Figure 6). In order to understand what freedom and democracy the powerful want to support and defend.

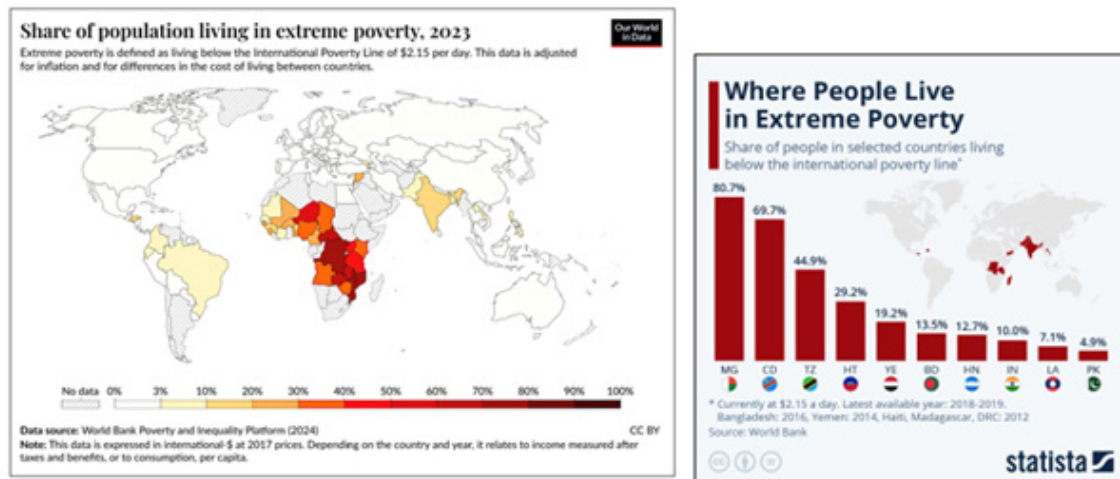


Figure 6: Map of populations living in extreme poverty.

Thus not only do the working people produce all the riches that make a nation great, and from which they draw, at best, only the crumbs and leftovers, but they must also fight the “ wars of liberation and defense of freedom” , that do not free them from their misery and inequality, even if they are the intended victims and they are the lives they put at stake.

Once the wars are over, they must suffer all the negative consequences, mourning, misery and destruction, while the politicians and rulers who provoke them only gain advantages. Yet this inconceivable absurd social system has been perpetuated for thousands of years, without arousing the slightest doubt that perhaps it is not exactly the best of social systems and that some other type of society is possible, where equality, freedom and peace can finally reign.

The aspiration for this type of new humanity and new society will be a utopia, but it would be worth fighting to try to achieve

it, going through various experiments of civil coexistence. In the meantime, we work for the emancipation of peoples and for the awareness of the injustices suffered and the demand for equal dignity and rights for all.

## Disclosure

The Authors declare no conflict of interest in this work.

## Acknowledgement

None.

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