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## ***Working-class solidarity in France and Italy stops weapons from arming Saudi Arabia***

Would the Saudi-flagged ship be able to load weapons in France or Italy bound for use in the brutal war against the 30 million people of Yemen?

The events of mid-to-late May gave an excellent example of the potential of international solidarity among European workers, which is also an act of solidarity with the oppressed Yemenis.

First in mid-May, dockworkers, human rights activists and anti-war organizations prevented the Saudi cargo ship from loading at Le Havre, France. The protests there had prevented the loading of weapons on the ship, the Bahri Yanbu.

They then warned Italian dockworkers that the Bahri Yanbu would soon be docking at Genoa, an industrial and port city on the west coast of Italy. The dockworkers there, called “Camalli,” though their number has decreased from 8,000 in 1987 to 1,000 today, have a history of internationalist and union activity. That dates from the anti-Fascist resistance during World War II to the militant struggles of the autumn of 1969, to refusal to load ships bringing weapons to the U.S. occupation in Vietnam.

When the authorities refused a request from the dockworkers union to inspect the ship, they refused to load the ship. They instead demonstrated in the dock area carrying the banner: “Stop arms trafficking, make war on war.”

Luigi Cianci, a leading Camalli, said the following: “During the Vietnam War we blocked the docking of American ships and in 1971 we organized a ship to aid the Vietnamese population. And we did the same during the Gulf War.

“Even if we are far fewer today and we want to defend our jobs, we do not want to do it at all costs: The war in Yemen is one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of recent years: 60,000 killed, 90,000 children dead from malnutrition, one million people affected by the cholera epidemic. We explained these things to our members and they all agreed on the boycott.” (Il manifesto, May 17)

For the moment at least, the delivery of weapons to the Saudi monarchy was halted. The French protesters and Genoese dockworkers have given a splendid example of working-class solidarity in Europe at a time when right-wing parties have shown their ugly racist and xenophobic heads. It is an example of working-class solidarity in Europe that contrasts with the united actions of European imperialists bankers and corporations carried out by the European Union bureaucracy.

Even better, the French and Italian workers have cooperated in solidarity with the embattled people of Yemen.

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