

# ***Eco-social convergence in Europe: notes toward a renewed internationalism in times of war***

**POE-Politics Ontologies Ecologies**

**«*Ecology and War: Between Nationalism, Capitalism and Class*»**

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Article; Aim;  
and  
Research/  
Political  
Question

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Re-elaboration based on the paper I co-authored with **Emanuele Leonardi** for *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2025), titled “*Eco-social Convergence in Europe: Notes Toward a Renewed Internationalism in Times of War*”

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As a PhD student in human geography and as an Insorgiamo activist (GKN support movement), I aim to **map eco-social convergence in Europe**, without neglecting the current impasse of climate justice activism.

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Research/Political Question: **Is climate justice still useful for imagining a renewed internationalism under today’s war regime?**



Two  
trajectories  
in climate  
justice  
activism

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**Global Palestine movement (2023-ongoing)**

**Live-streaming genocide** becomes the **moral urgency**, displacing climate. Intensification of the **moral tension towards political sacrifice** by climate activists.

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**Eco-social convergence in Europe (2019-ongoing?)**

A political and ecological process – started in 2018-19 with the wave of climate justice movements, deepened after pandemic. An articulation of **class-based** climate justice that opens **new subjective and objective paths** for internationalism

# Ecological transition from above failed

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After more than 25 years, **emissions keep rising**;

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Climate governance **channeled profit** without delivering proportional decarbonization

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Subjectively, this process **marginalized labour**, recasting workers as obstacles or green entrepreneurs.

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**The market did not slow climate change; it socialized costs and privatized gains.**

2018–19: seeds  
for ecological  
transition “from  
below” and eco-  
social  
convergence

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Climate justice movements as **Fridays For Future** and **Extinction Rebellion** emerged on an unprecedented **global** scale, with a specifically **European** intensity:

*“if solutions inside **the system fail, change the system**”*

Subjectively, young people and radicals address workers and MAPA (Most Affected Peoples and Areas)

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**France:** Irruption of the **Gilet Jaunes**, against the unjust distribution of carbon tax; reframed transition:

*“who pays this transition?”*

*“end of the month, end of the world: same struggle”*

Subjectively, it **politicized ecology beyond green middle-class** lifestyle and brought class back into the climate arena

# 2020-2023: Eco-social convergence in practice

- **UK:** in 2021, *Insulate Britain* put energy poverty at the centre of public debate; in 2022 *Just Stop Oil* and **XR Trade Unions** engaged with unions during the unprecedented energy and cost-of-living crisis
- Germany: since 2020 *Wir Fahren Zusammen* links climate and union activists in an effective campaign on sustainable mobility
- **In Southern and Eastern Europe**, where climate groups are newer and resources are scarcer, eco-convergence came **through the protagonism of unions and workers** framing climate as a class issue.

**GKN: an  
internationalist  
laboratory  
of eco-social  
struggle and  
transition**

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Turning job defence issue in general  
movement to system change

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**Eco-social conversion plans of  
the factory**

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**“Eco-social convergence” is  
adapted from their use of the  
term ‘convergenza’ (in Italian)**

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Reshaping movement landscape in  
Italy and inspiring abroad by **tying  
social and ecological**, protests and  
alternatives

# Convergence also means internationali sm

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Across Europe, **connections are—or were?—forming** between workers, unions, and climate activists.

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The identitarian retreat of the old labor movement in response to new social movement (Arrighi, Wallerstein & Hopkins) could be overcome.

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**eco-social convergence** pushes toward a new internationalism: eco-social campaigns and highly “localized” class struggle (ex. GKN) with a huge trans-local potential.

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+ **War regime**: EU subordinated ecology to rearmament and fossil

Political  
Bifurcation in  
Europe:  
constitutionalizing war regime  
vs. ecology

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The old neoliberal motto “*the market will save us*” slides into “*the army will protect us.*”

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Weapons production becomes a central driver of industrial and technological planning. More fossil dependence, accelerated ecological damage, and erosion of social welfare.

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Ecological transition (from above) failed to restart the process of turning the EU into a political project; the **war regime seems to be taking its place.**

Industrial  
bifurcation:  
Eco-social  
convergence  
VS  
“rearmament”  
and war  
transition

- Crucial role of the industrial sector (in crisis) and its workers. Indeed, the European **industrial sphere** is the **pivot of war transition in the economy**, indicated by elites as both politically and productively necessary in Europe.
- Internationalism doesn't mean nostalgic universalism of the old working class. Admitting the risk of this subjective interpretation because class-based ecological solidarities aren't sufficiently connected to **decolonial** and **feminist** struggles
- The general and rich convergence trajectory of GKN struggle (including migrant solidarity) needs to be spread.

# Conclusion

- The **failure** of the transition from above, the **rise** of eco-social convergence from below, and the **war regime** are three moments of one sequence in which **climate activism** plays a pivotal **political** role, showing the necessary link between radical protests and **concrete productive alternatives at an international scale**.
- Although the war regime, combining nationalism, militarism and a war economy, undermined this political process in terms of attention and, therefore, the confidence of the actors involved, **eco-social convergence seems the (only?) counter-tendency that could produce a political and economic bifurcation, especially in Europe**.

# Questions for the roundtable

- *What's the role of **social movement studies** in this war transition conjuncture, where the sectionalization of social (and ecological) movements IS the problem?*
- *-Conceptually, is “**ecological transition from below**” producing an imaginary which is deresponsabilising in this new political conjuncture and at that scale? I mean, the weakness and slowness to achieve concrete ecological transition from below could result in renounce to political mediation, where ecological transition, unspecified, appears as the (possible, weak but still meaningful, especially in Europe) only alternative to war transition.*