

A Perugia citizen holds a placard reading, "Let's throw the U.S. bases into the sea."

## DISARMAMENT

# Is the European peace movement a dead END?

By Diana Johnstone

PERUGIA, ITALY

**H**AS THE EUROPEAN PEACE movement unwittingly played into the hands of those who are working feverishly to turn Western Europe into a nuclear superpower? By harping on Europe's specific security interests in opposition to the U.S. and Soviet Union, has the anti-Euromissile movement inadvertently provided the ideological foundations for a new "West European Reich"?

This provocative question was raised by Roland Vogt, Green member of the West German Bundestag's defense committee last month at the third annual European Nuclear Disarmament (END) convention. Vogt alerted the peace activists gathered here to the arms buildup being prepared by the grouping of NATO core governments—Britain, West Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux states—called the Western European Union (WEU). Few people are aware that the council of WEU foreign ministers that met in Paris on June 28 agreed to lift the last of the postwar restrictions on West German military production in conventional fields—other than nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. West German firms such as Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm are now free to go ahead with production of strategic bombers and long-range missiles, and various deals for joint Western missile production are already on the boards.

Vogt, who with Petra Kelly represents the Greens on the WEU's consultative

assembly, observed that the WEU is the favorite forum of the strategists of European militarism. The group leaves open the question of whether the arms buildup is meant to "strengthen the European pillar of NATO," as the phrase goes these days, or if the aim is to create the nucleus of an independent West European military power. This ambiguity enables German leaders to stress their loyalty to NATO and French orators to proclaim "independence from the two superpowers" while doing the same thing: expanding military production. Vogt pointed out that the rapid growth of a strong German component in a West European military-industrial complex was bound to accelerate the arms race, both in the Third World, whose military leaders will want to buy the latest German-made high tech weapons, and in the Eastern bloc, where fear of German militarism is the surest stimulus to Russian militarism.

The WEU can also be used as a bridge to end the longstanding division of labor between the European Community (EC), concerned with economic matters, and NATO, a military alliance. The WEU has the advantage of leaving out troublesome little countries like Denmark, Greece and Ireland, who might raise objections. The seven WEU countries, he said, "are taking on the peacemaker role for the transformation of the civilian European Community into a highly armed and militarized Western European superpower. This can mean the founding of a new Reich analogous to Bismarck's. At present it seems that France is trying to take on the role played by Prussia in the founding of Bismarck's Reich."

Vogt, mild in his manner as befits a

pacifist, was deliberately trying to shock the French into paying attention to this problem by using the word "Reich" in all languages and comparing *la belle France* to its historic enemy, Prussia. He did not immediately succeed. The French delegates to the Perugia conference were almost entirely absorbed in the controversy over relations with Eastern Europe. Indeed, most of the 1,200 peace activists from all over the world were not even aware of Vogt's workshop on the WEU or of the problem he was raising. Apparently stung by criticism that last year's convention in West Berlin was too organized to suit the temperament of most peace activists, the liaison committee underorganized this one. In the confusion, only the most resolute voices could make themselves heard, and the theme that dominated was the most immediately dramatic, the most controversial, the most appealing to the press: East-West relations.

Officially, the Perugia convention was supposed to deal with three themes: movement strategy after the failure to stop Euromissile deployment, the Mediterranean and the "North-South" dimension of the nuclear arms race and, finally, "dialog" with other peace movements (not only in Eastern Europe but also in America and the Pacific area) and with the non-aligned and Third World liberation movements. But the "East-West" problems overshadowed all the rest.

### Unwitting agents.

Two movement stars, Mient Jan Faber of Holland and Mary Kaldor of Britain, is-

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**Claimed Green member Roland Vogt: "We did not manage to bring out the politics of nuclear weapons."**

## Conversion is still an uphill battle

Growing interest among trade unionists in converting military industries to peaceful uses was probably the most encouraging trend visible at the Perugia convention. But it must be seen as an uphill battle against the much more powerful movement in the opposite direction. Gigi Pannozzo of the big Italian metalworkers federation FLM acknowledged that "a growing number of firms not traditionally involved in war production are introducing manufacture of military devices, or parts of them, to fill production gaps left by the recession and above all in response to prospects of profits linked to programs for modernizing conventional arsenals."

Peter Hug of the Swiss Peace Council warned that an arms buildup in the framework of the revived Western European Union (WEU) would further strengthen the "military-bureaucratic-scientific-industrial complex." Hug noted that the peace movement bore the "heavy responsibility" of having provided attractive excuses for this "Europeanization," but sees hope in labor unions' striving for industrial conversion to production geared to human needs, not to war.

Trade unionists have held two important international conversion conferences, in West Berlin in May 1983 and in Boston last June. Pannozzo called for a follow-up to the Boston conference in Europe, and also for creation of a work group on conversion made up of unionists from both Eastern and Western Europe. Such a concrete focus might well be the most constructive approach to the East-West dialog problem.

Ron Todd, the newly elected general secretary of the British Transport and General Workers Union, the biggest in the U.K. and in British defense industry, brought to Perugia the cheering news that the British trade union movement is about to put into practice "a comprehensive and detailed strategy for arms conversion." Its starting point will be "the creativity which exists on the shop floor." Inspiration comes from the example of the alternative product ideas developed by employees at Lucas Aerospace.

"A national conversion steering committee has now been established," Todd explained. "Local authorities are establishing their own conversion councils. Funding is being made available. University departments are being asked to help. We are making conversion a central part of union education courses. And we are now taking steps to set up the first Alternative Use Committee in defense workplaces, committees which will draw up plans for the conversion of that workplace to peaceful, socially useful production." The British Trade Union Confederation is about to launch a national debate on defense spending and conversion, and a detailed conversion program will be brought to the British Labor Party conference in September.

Todd is convinced that people do not like making weapons of war, but usually believe they have no choice. Conversion, he says, is about giving workers an opportunity to do something else.

"There is a real prospect of concrete, tangible progress in the next few months," he said. "No longer are we picketing outside the factory gates talking at defense workers. We are sitting down with them, talking with them and planning with them concrete alternatives to the arms race."

But others cautioned against trying to solve the problem shop by shop. Some industries can be converted to peaceful production, others cannot. The point is to make alternative jobs available, one place or another. "We mustn't stick too closely to the workplace," one British trade unionist stressed during workshop debate. "After all, capitalism is always converting everything, shutting down some factories and starting up new ones."

—D.J.



Continued from previous page  
sued a joint paper on "Ending the Occupation of Europe: the only way to save detente." The campaign against cruise and Pershing II missiles was very successful in raising consciousness about the danger of nuclear war, they said. "But we did not manage to bring out the politics of nuclear weapons. And by failing to do so, we may have become unwitting agents in the new Cold War. By emphasizing first strike and counterforce capabilities and the Reaganite aim of nuclear superiority, we may have given the Soviet establishment an argument to justify their own armament buildup. We ought to have exposed the role of nuclear weapons as instruments of social control. What we need to do now is to raise consciousness about the political future of Europe," they concluded.

Faber and Kaldor called for "a wide-ranging discussion throughout Europe about the nature of our occupied status" and how to end it. "We cannot sustain a peace movement on the basis of fear: indeed fear of nuclear war can be counterproductive," they said. "Fear of nuclear war is a way of traumatizing people into submission: it is, in itself, an element of occupation."

In contrast, Vogt raised the question of "whether the people of the peace movement think that things will turn out better merely through the fact that Europeans take control over certain military systems." The peace movement was right to warn of the dangers that American military strategy posed to Europe, he said.

"But we have set up a situation where the specious conclusion being drawn is that everything must be better when it's European. So the key word now is 'Europeanization.'"

"And my question," said Vogt, "is: what's the difference between the U.S. Americans and the Europeans? There is only a difference in degree. Europeans are exploitative, they waste raw materials obtained through unequal treaties from Third World countries. Historically, the majority of U.S. citizens are transplanted Europeans, who have transferred the European approach to another part of the globe. Now if the Europeans, who are the mother continent, take over mass destruction weapons from the U.S. Americans, I don't see a substantial fundamental difference."

Most END leaders seem to feel that to be more "political," they need to tackle the East-West problem head on. E.P. Thompson in particular got END into the business of "contacts" and "dialog" with Eastern European peace movements on the basis of an undeniably accurate political observation: the Eastern European human rights situation is a serious problem to Western European peace movements because it provides the best reason for Western Europeans to fear Soviet military power and thus accept military buildups in their own countries. By acknowledging this problem, Western peace movement leaders have hoped to improve their credibility at home. Criticism of Soviet repression, contacts—even frustrated—with Eastern dissidents or peace groups trying to operate outside of-

ficial structures are held up as proof that Western peace activists are not Moscow's stooges.

There are dangers in concern with politically smart "appearances." After the favorable media coverage, then what? Changing the system in the Eastern bloc seems an even more difficult task for the Western peace movements than changing their own.

Organizers invited both the official Soviet-bloc Peace Councils and the "independents" to Perugia. There was hope that being polite to the "officials" might loosen things up for the "unofficials." But of the "unofficials," only a few Hungarian independents showed up. Some Polish and East German exiles attended, and there were letters from Polish *Solidarnosc* (very critical of the Western peace movement) and the Czechoslovakian civil rights group Charter 77 (less critical).

The official Peace Councils sent delegates who had to listen to a great deal of protest. The opening program was interrupted by a demonstration protesting Eastern European authorities' muzzling of 59 invited independents who were unable to come. This set off the controversy over "dialog with the East" that continued throughout the convention, dividing participants according to temperament and analysis. Most were situated somewhere between the Danish woman who objected that it was "not polite" to demonstrate against invited guests (the Russians) and the young French woman who vehemently denounced any conversation with the Soviet "assassins and

torturers."

Although the French nuclear disarmament committee CODENE is almost invisible in the battle against French and other nuclear arsenals and seems oblivious to the French role in reviving the WEU as the nucleus of a European superpower, it played a leading role in drafting a statement "Beyond Yalta" meant to provide a common platform for Western peace movements and Eastern European movements like *Solidarnosc*.

### Crippling itself?

One may wonder how politically astute it is to concentrate the peace movement's attention on a problem it cannot possibly solve, and to accept its opponents' contention that the credibility of peace movements in the West depends on human rights liberalization in the East. The movement could wind up crippling itself. West German theologian Dorothee Solle said that, on the contrary, the West as the richest, most advanced and most free part of the world should take the lead in building a social model. "What is the use of being freer if we don't work for peace?" she demanded.

There is the matter of timing. In Perugia, the peace movement was tackling the Eastern problem while most sectors were still far from having worked out enough of an analysis or a strategy to know what they had to propose to Eastern Europeans, either official or unofficial. For one thing, approaches will differ to the extent that the East-West conflict is seen as the basic cause of the arms race, or, on the contrary, as the pretext for a military might that preserves Soviet dominance in the Eastern bloc and American and European dominance over most of the Third World.

Jo Leinen, chairman of the West German peace movement coordinating committee, said he thought the END liaison committee members themselves had been a bit "seduced by the excitement" of the East-West question. He observed that the issue created divisions and distrust within the peace movement, had little to do with grassroots peace work and prevented using Perugia to coordinate strategy and action. "We are losing one year, when there are very urgent discussions needed, such as on the Western European Union question," he said. The WEU is "constructing new military systems, getting a whole political and military infrastructure together, and we can't afford the luxury of changing subjects."

Thus few people in Perugia heard Vogt's call for a peace movement colloquium in Rome, to be held when the WEU defense ministers meet there in late October. Vogt predicts that the WEU arms buildup will cause a split in the peace movement. While in the past Social Democrats always showed opposition to military projects, "nowadays nobody dares to vote against them. And that has to do with the fact that they are discussed under the pretext of contributing to European independence."

However, the split, if there is one, does not seem to correspond with party lines. Leinen, a Social Democrat, would also give priority to the WEU issue, whereas the leader of the successful effort to make East-West relations the dominant issue in Perugia was Dieter Esche of the West Berlin Green-Alternative List.

In Perugia, Social Democrats from Germany and Scandinavia along with British Laborites tended to champion polite relations with official peace councils, that is, "detente from above," while some more radical currents sought to promote "detente from below," meaning contacts with forces independent of or in opposition to the Eastern regimes.

Leinen took a calm, long-range view of these differences. The Greens, he noted, do not yet have an *Ostpolitik*, an Eastern European policy of their own, and are experimenting. As most of them come from movements, they see the world in terms of movements and think they should find movements everywhere. They are learning from experience. Leinen is convinced that by the end of the century, West Germany will have a Social Democratic-Green coalition government, and everything going on meanwhile in the peace movement helps form the political program for that eventual coalition.

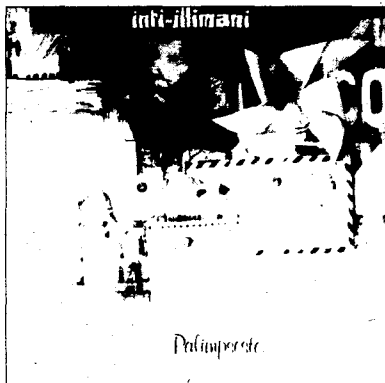
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## GUATEMALA

# Army destroys then rebuilds

By Chris Norton

### GUATEMALAN HIGHLANDS

**T**WO AND A HALF YEARS AGO guerrillas dominated large portions of the spectacularly beautiful, pine-covered mountains of northern Guatemala. But today these Indian highlands are quiet. After a wave of bloody army offensives that may have claimed 20,000 lives in 1982, whole portions of the countryside are depopulated.

The army wiped out whole villages suspected of guerrilla sympathies. Indians who fled into the mountains were hunted down. The survivors, some who hid in the mountains for two years, now live in army-controlled strategic hamlets. The army calls them "model villages."

The destruction cannot be seen by the casual observer. The most devastated areas are accessible only by foot because the guerrillas made their base in remote Indian communities. And the Guatemalan military, well-read in Mao, decided to remove the sea from the fish.

A ring of destruction surrounds the three towns that make up the Ixil Triangle—a former bastion of the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP). The EGP used to be the largest of the guerrilla organizations, before the ruthless army offensives wiped out and dislocated its civilian base.

Most of the villages around the Ixil towns of Nebaj, Chajul and San Juan Cotzal are still abandoned. Their surviving inhabitants live in refugee camps waiting for the army to relocate them to "model villages" the army is now constructing.

The army describes this as the "consolidation phase" of its counterinsurgency war—the rebuilding of what it destroyed—and proudly presents its plans for establishing four "poles of development." The Nebaj area is one—the army has plans for 40 "model villages"—in the region of heaviest conflict.

Even where the army is not constructing "model villages" the theme is the same—forced concentration of the Indian population, which traditionally lives dispersed in the middle of small cornfields. The difference is between maximum and minimum security prisons.

This massive restructuring of the countryside is based on classic counterinsurgency theory as successfully applied by the British against the Malaysian insurgency and with less success by the U.S. in Vietnam.

One of the Guatemalan colonels in charge of the program acknowledged that the strategy uses "the same concept as in Vietnam." But he hastened to point out that the policy failed in Vietnam because it was imposed from abroad and hence "wasn't accepted by the people." In contrast, the Guatemalan army uses the rhetoric of nationalism and developmentalism. The army-imposed civil patrols always carry Guatemala's blue and white flag and crudely lettered signs on the side of the road declare Guatemala the land of "peace and development."

Also distinct from Vietnam, where the army was a weak organization of former collaborators with the French, Guatemala's army has been the country's dominant institution for much of the 20th century. Having fought a guerrilla insurgency since the early '60s, Guatemala's army is the most experienced in counterinsurgency in Central America. It has developed a sophisticated strategy integrating the counterinsurgency experience and training of Israel, Argentina, Taiwan, South Africa and South Korea.

### The role of "self-defense."

In addition to concentrating the population, establishing "civil self-defense patrols" is a key army strategy. All men between the ages of 18 and

from 12 hours once a month in larger towns to 24 hours once a week in more remote areas.

The obligatory patrols seriously weaken the campesinos, who often are too tired after all-night guard duty to work the next day. In many parts of the country the patrols have diminished food production, already damaged by the army-induced dislocations. In some target areas the army has stepped in with a "food for work" program—displaced persons get food instead of pay for working in public works projects. Those displaced by the army's violence are thus dependent on it for survival.

The army says that the people requested patrols for protection from guerrillas. Yet those who decline to participate can be jailed or worse. Ostensibly, the patrols are for defense, but many patrols carry only sticks or machetes, and those that are armed have only shotguns or rifles. None would be effective against guerrillas armed with automatic weapons.

The patrols are supposed to scrutinize everyone entering and leaving every rural community. In addition, "with the patrols you have a control on every able-bodied man in an area," says an American priest with two decades of experience in the Guatemalan highlands. "He has to report and they know if he shows up or not. It have very little to do with defense."

The patrols are also used to disrupt Indian communities, according to numerous sources. In one case, near the famous tourist town of Chichicastenango, the army presented patrol leaders with a list of five Indians it said were "communists." The leaders were told that they had until five the next morning to execute the men or the army would destroy the whole village. After an all-night meeting the community decided that it had to go ahead and kill the men.

The army also encourages the spread of born-again evangelical Protestant sects, which, with their emphasis on individual salvation, pose less of a threat to the government than the Catholic Church. Influenced by liberation theology and more committed to social justice and collective action to achieve it, Catholics are perceived by many in the army as "subversive." The Church and especially its lay leaders are hit hard by army repression.

Some very conservative Protestant sects, such as the Nazarenes and the Assemblies of God, have cozy relationships with the military. Protestants are often appointed as military commissioners and some evangelical groups boast that membership in their church can help in dealings with the authorities.

The army claims that it is concentrating the population "to provide it with social services" unavailable to a more dispersed population. But numerous religious sources say that forced urbanization has brought increased disease and social disintegration. Incidence of alcoholism, marital disputes and rape have all increased and parents take less responsibility for their children, said these sources.

Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, exemplifies the problems the army's restructuring has brought. Rabinal was devastated by army massacres beginning in 1979. These massacres left 4,000 widows in a population of 27,000. Rabinal is reached by an hour and a half bus ride on a dirt road that hugs a steep mountainside. Most residents lived on tiny plots of land scattered on the steep hillsides surrounding the town.

The small size of their plots and the poor soil forced many Indians to migrate to the south coast during harvest times to augment their income. The Indians of Rabinal have traditionally been rebellious, and the combination of their poverty, Church consciousness raising and exposure to radical organizing by the Committee of Campesino Unity (CUC) helped the EGP guerrillas find support



there. In September 1981 the guerrillas, probably aided by many of the locals, burned all the bridges leading into town. Within a week, a paramilitary group connected with the army attacked people in the plaza, killing 20. The army built a military base in Rabinal and the attacks on catechists and health and education promoters increased. The army also started a steady stream of massacres at outlying villages thought to be guerrilla-dominated.

### Guerrilla mistakes.

The guerrillas were badly hurt by the army's offensive of 1982 and 1983, especially the EGP (the Guerrilla Army of the Poor), formerly the largest of the four major groups. After patient work in building a strong base in the Indian highlands during the '70s, the EGP expanded too rapidly in 1981 and 1982, trying to consolidate areas they couldn't defend



**The army enters the consolidation phase of the counterinsurgency war and proudly presents its plan for establishing four "poles of development."**

IN THESE TIMES AUG. 22-SEPT. 4, 1984 11 when the army accelerated its offensive after the March 1982 coup that brought Rios Montt to power.

Even people sympathetic to the EGP are critical of its triumphalism, which caused them to misread their strength and pressure Indian villages to commit themselves, promising that they would defeat the army in six months to a year if everybody fought together. Yet when the army took brutal reprisals against villages that had constructed booby traps or otherwise sided with the guerrillas, the EGP was unable—and some charge unwilling—to defend them.

"They wanted to do in four years what would have taken 10 or 15 years," said one source. "They provoked many massacres by the army. Now, the whole process has been set back about 10 years. The guerrilla units are still intact but the people are not willing to cooperate anymore. It will be very difficult to gain the confidence of the people again." The whole experience has apparently provoked a split in the EGP with some members charging the organization had manipulated religion and had not given the Indian leadership sufficient authority.

The other guerrilla organizations, however, weren't as affected as the EGP. ORPA (Organization of the People in Arms) and FAR (Rebel Armed Forces) both recruit secretly instead of enlisting whole villages that can be wiped out by the army.

ORPA operates in its traditional area, the finca-filled foothills between the highlands and the coastal plain. It has given the army problems around Cicacao, in the foothills near Lake Atitlan, ambushing army units in March and evading the army response.

FAR—the direct descendant of the original '60s guerrilla insurgency—is active in the Peten, the northwest jungle region.

Chief of state Gen. Mejia Victores declared the day after the July 1 elections that "the subversion has ended." Yet guerrilla units, even of the hard-hit EGP, are reportedly intact and the insurgency won't go away. Different polling places in the highlands received many nullified ballots that had "EGP" or "OPRA" written on them, a surprising and dangerous show of support for the guerrillas.

*The army encourages the spread of born-again evangelical Protestant sects.*

The Guatemalan military recently allowed elections for an assembly that will write a new constitution—the first step in handing formal power back to civilians. Yet the army can now afford to turn over formal power, according to an American priest with long experience in the Guatemalan highlands, since the army has "taken over the real power bases in the countryside."

The Guatemalan army has become the super-government, transcending the political parties and the government apparatus itself. The army's restructuring of the Guatemalan highlands has set back the guerrilla insurgency. But whether the army can—or even wants to—deliver on its developmentalist rhetoric remains to be seen. Such a course would threaten the economic interests of the oligarchy and of some wealthy generals as well. Meanwhile, the social causes of the insurgency—the inequitable distribution of land and wealth, and the marginalization of the Indian population—seem unlikely to change.