

"ON THE FUTURE OF PEACE MOVEMENTS IN ITALY AND WESTERN EUROPE"
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As I come from Italy, I imagine you are all expecting me to speak on the founding, development and crisis of the Italian peace movements. This will only be partially true, since I believe that it is much better to go and read up on this sort of thing. Printed information enters and remains in our brains much more easily, whereas conferences and meetings of this kind should be used to provoke and offer stimuli for further work. I would like to refer here to two articles that I have written on the subject: one is in Italian and can be found in issue No. 1/1987 of the Italian journal on international politics Politica Internazionale. The other appeared recently in a West German volume which might be of interest to all participants here since it is, as far as I know, one of the few more recent comparative studies on peace movements in Western and Eastern Europe and the US: Janning/Legrand/Zander: "Friedensbewegungen, Entwicklung und Folgen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Europa und den USA", Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, Köln, 1987.

As for the structure of my paper, I would like, on the one hand, to briefly summarize the results of my research on Italian peace movements in recent years, and on the other, compare them with other developments in Western Europe. A few general, and in my opinion generalizable, remarks with regard to the developments and the possibilities of peace movements and their assessment by peace research conclude the paper.

(I) PEACE MOVEMENTS IN ITALY

(a) Emergence / Height / Crisis / Latest trends

Let's start with a short rundown of the most important events involving the Italian peace movements. As is well known, in 1979, the NATO double-track decision provided for the installation of 112 Cruise missiles on Italian soil. This new military decision was the catalyst for the first Italian mass mobilizations. Between 1981 and 1983, there were demonstrations and marches all over Italy, culminating in the demonstration in October 1983, which brought around one million people into the streets of Rome to protest against the

installation of new missiles and for peace. This first phase of general protest was interrupted in March 1984 by the beginning of the installation of the first Cruise missiles at Comiso (in Sicily). This event dealt a serious blow to the Italian peace movements, as its main demand -namely to prevent the installation of the new missiles- was suddenly swept aside. A new phase of disappointment and frustration, but also of self-analysis and a search for new perspectives set in. Several peace groups continued their work and delved more thoroughly into questions somewhat neglected up to that time such as Italian weapons exports and defense spendings. But this second phase (1984-1985) no longer witnessed the mass mobilizations that had taken place between 1981 and 1983. Finally, the last two years have marked a new third phase in Italian mobilizations for peace, constituting something of a compromise between the first phase, based mainly on quantity (great mass demonstrations), and the second phase, directed mainly at quality (more thorough examination of several subjects). Above all, three occurrences took place in 1986 which characterized this new phase: the US attack on Libya in April was a direct cause for anti-war demonstrations all over Italy; several hundred thousand people protested against the US attack and against Italian military involvement in the conflict. Not much later -in May of the same year- the Chernobyl disaster took place, giving rise to a demonstration in Rome with about 100,000 participants; peace and ecological movements took to the streets together in protest against the military and civilian use of nuclear energy. Lastly, in October, the peace movement mobilized about 400,000 people in Rome in a multiple demonstration against weapon exports, defense spendings, the American SDI project and for a positive conclusion of the arms control talks between the US and the Soviet Union taking place at the same time in Reykjavik.

(b) Italy's foreign and security policy and the peace movements

Let's stick with analysis of the contents and the aims of the Italian peace movements. The main aim between 1981 and 1983 was to prevent NATO's rearmament, whereas the subjects taken up thereafter (weapon exports, military spendings, nuclear energy, etc.) were not able to draw on the same mass support from the population. The situation becomes even shakier when we consider that national foreign and security policy matters were only partially dealt with by some peace groups, while most of the Italian peace activists remained silent and did not develop its own stance in this respect. Among these priorities, especially in view of Italy's geostrategic position in the Mediterranean, are: Italy's participation in NATO, perceived as militarily threatening by numerous Mediterranean countries; Italy's military peace-keeping endeavours in some crisis regions (Sinai peninsula, Lebanon, Suez Canal); the new phenomenon of international terrorism; Italy's relatively ambiguous position with regard to Israel and the Palestinian question, as well as Italy's colonial past, i.e. in Libya and Ethiopia. These and other matters inherent to the Italian situation were practically ignored during the mass demonstrations of the past years and I am rather skeptical that important changes will come out in the near future.

You may ask for the reasons of this skepticism. Well, the developments of the last years have evidenced that peace movements' quantity and quality were not able to grow reciprocally at the same time and with the same dynamism. With this, I don't want to say that there is an inverse proportionality, in sense that the more quantity a movement has, the less quality it contains, and

viceversa. But in my opinion there are limits, beyond them no further growings are possible without losses on the one or the other side. For this reason, I think that several authors emphasizing the movements' lack of contents are illusory, overestimating the relations between public opinion and foreign policy in general and therefore not recognizing the whole dimension of the problem.

(c) Effects of the Italian peace movements

Let's try to answer the question whether and to what extent the Italian peace demonstrations in recent years achieved something. In this case, I am taking into consideration mainly the anti-rearmament demonstrations, as much general consensus focussed on this one point and brought the largest number of people into the streets. If we ask the question about the direct short-term effects, the answer is devastating. The installation of Cruise missiles in Sicily made it evident that political decision-makers were not impressed enough by mass demonstrations to change their politics.

But skepticism is also recommended in answer to the middle and long-term effects of the mobilizations of those years. Let's take a look at the political situation in Italy at the time. The Italian parliamentary elections held in June 1987 only changed the political balance of power very slightly. The government coalition, which already in 1979 agreed to the NATO double-track decision and declared its readiness to install the new missiles, still holds the reins of power. Thus, continuity in foreign and security policy is ensured for the next few years, while the opposition parties, which opposed rearmament, were not particularly rewarded during the elections. In example Italy's biggest opposition party, the Communist Party, which had been in the forefront of most peace demonstrations, actually suffered a considerable loss percent of its electorate (the Communists lost about 2,5 percent of votes).

In this context, I want to emphasize that we had similar evolutions in several other Western European countries, as in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Belgium, in the Netherlands and (last but not least?) in Great Britain. Frequently there was a gap between the mass-demonstrations for peace on the one side and the electoral results on the other. Also for this reason, in my opinion peace movements' activities and possible results have been overestimated by several of us.

(II) PEACE MOVEMENTS IN ITALY AND WESTERN EUROPE

(a) A comparison of Italian and Western European developments

Let's now come to a comparison of Italian and Western European developments. Here I would like to consider, above all, if there is a North-South fall in Western Europe with regard to start and evolution of peace movements. Certainly, in order to be able to deal with the matter thoroughly, we should examine more closely the various developments in the different countries and analyze comparable data category by category. Yet, this is very difficult, since, in the publications I am aware of, information about each country is set up in a too different way.

Nevertheless, in order to give a provisional answer to the question, the distinctions in quantity and quality may be of help. In other words, on the one hand we can see how many people could be mobilized for peace demonstrations in several European countries during a specific period of time, and on the other we can look at the platforms and aims of the single Western European peace movements.

Let's start with quantity: the first large demonstrations took place in Italy in September 1981, approximately one month after the Italian government's decision to accept the installation of 112 Cruise missiles in Sicily. In October we had the first of the so-called "hot autumns", both in Italy as in several countries of Western Europe. In Rome, from 300,000 to 500,000 people demonstrated for peace, followed by around 170,000 people in Florence in November and about 200,000 people in Milan in April 1982 (just to mention the most important). Therefore, I would say that as far as mass participation is concerned, the Italian demonstrations were on a par with similar events in other countries. So there was no North-South fall at this level, at least as far as Italy is concerned; unfortunately, I have found little information about these matters for other southern European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Greece.

As for quality - besides the common denominator of the protest against rearmament, which was a basis for consensus in all Western European peace movements - the Italian peace movements have given little consideration to the problems of national foreign and security policy. I know that some peace movements in other countries dealt more with these national priorities: for example, in the German Federal Republic, questions of East-West relations were examined more closely; in Austria, there was discussion about Austrian neutrality and the CSCE; Spain's entry into NATO and NATO bases were crucial queries. With respect to contents, Italian peace movements have not developed their independence as much as other countries. Nevertheless, I don't think there's any justification for speaking of a North-South situation. First, because much self-focussed discussion has taken place in some southern European countries and second, because there is still too little data available for an accurate comparison.

(b) "Structural Heterogeneity"

That brings me to my next point dealing with the problem of making international comparisons. In analyzing a subject, I feel that social research should differentiate before moving on to formulating general conclusions. To that end, the concept of **Structural Heterogeneity (SH)**, conceived within critical development theory discussions at the end of the Seventies and used in different ways by various others since then, seems particularly suitable. Structural Heterogeneity could serve as a theoretical basis for future comparative work on our subject, since it points out both national and international structural differences on the various social interaction axes - "underdogs-underdogs", "underdogs-topdogs" and "topdogs-topdogs" - while taking into consideration quantitative as well as qualitative factors.

Structural Heterogeneity can be found at three levels: the first is concerned mainly with the structural quantitative and qualitative differences within the movements themselves. The second deals with the structural relationship of the peace movements in a country with the existing political and cultural institutions and political decision-makers, while the third refers to the international dimension of peace movements and to their structural differences.

(1) The first level (see table 1) highlights the differences between peace movements in a given country. The people who protested for peace after the NATO double-track decision were of mixed social, political and cultural background brought together as individuals belonging to different trade unions, parties, religions, etc.. This mixed composition had a strong impact on the movements' composition and platform.

As far as the heterogeneous composition of the peace movements in any given country are concerned, attempts made at setting up a stable and efficiently coordinating network among the various groups - to improve poorly functioning communication channels and forms of interaction among the often isolated local and regional initiatives - were hindered by technical, organizational and financial difficulties. With reference to the heterogeneous contents, the varied backgrounds of the people active in the peace movements led to different evaluations of single matters, with a minimum common consensus only about the prevention of the installation of missiles. In Italy, for example, Catholic-inspired grass-roots organizations were particularly critical on weapons exports, but were unable to find much support for their stance in many other peace activists, at the same time members of trade unions, which tended to legitimize arms production from an employmental point of view. In the same way, it was difficult to reach common and homogeneous appraisals on the role and function of NATO, on the possibility of unilateral nuclear disarmament as well as on the effectiveness of nuclear and/or conventional defense. Differences in the evaluation of the road to peace as well as in the aims of peace again and again created internal tensions and polemics, which has been evident in the frequent splintering off of several peace-engaged groups and institutions.

(2) The second level (see table 2) deals with the relationship of peace movements to the existing social institutions and political decision-makers in each country. Here again, the fact mentioned above concerning the mixed social, political and cultural background of the people engaged in the peace movements plays an important role. The individual persons, working for peace carried out a double social function, in that they were active not only within the peace movements, but also at the same time participants in various political, social and cultural institutions (as parties, trade unions, churches etc.). This affected the structure and the platform of the peace movements, on the one hand, and parallelly forced the political, social and cultural institutions to take up positions with respect to the peace movements activities.

(3) The third level (see table 3) concerns the structural differences in foreign and security policy among Western European countries and their repercussions on the peace movements' activities. In this context, we can distinguish between form and content.

As far as form is concerned, the national heterogeneities are also reflected in a comparison at a Western European level. Above and beyond the quantitatively and qualitatively different peace movements, likewise the various social institutions and political decision-makers built up communication channels varying in strength within and between countries. This brings us to the contents. On account of the Western European states' particular geo-strategic location - above and beyond common factors such as NATO, the EEC or the OECD - different stances were worked out in foreign and security policy. Thus, for example, Italy's special role in NATO's southern flank, Austria's guaranteed neutrality and the German Federal Republic's particular relations with the German Democratic Republic, etc., reflect their uniqueness. These different national considerations in foreign and security policy are not only reflected in the platforms and aims of the political decision-makers and other social institutions, but also in the programmes and goals of the existing respective peace movements, albeit to different degrees; some stronger, some weaker (the Italians, as mentioned, weaker).

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize once more that the concept of Structural Heterogeneity can be of use in discovering gaps in research carried out on peace movements during the eighties, and in moving away from superficial generalizations towards more thorough and differentiated analyses. Just as the term 'new peace movement' has been insufficient to accurately describe the mass mobilizations that have taken place, we should start today to realize that it is also not enough to say that the 'new' peace movement has 'aged'.

Relating to peace movements' activities, we had several articles and books published by peace researchers in the last years. But many of them have been too naive, optimistic and superficially, overestimating the new phenomenon of the mass-demonstrations against NATO-rearmament and - beyond this very specific kind of discussion - the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy in general, believing in their euphorism that a new and permanent social actor has arised into political life. I don't agree with this point of view, and fortunately there have been also some more realistic and impartial researchers who warned of unnecessary hang-over. I think that we should use our concluding session also for some more self-critical reflections into this direction.

"Structural Heterogeneity" appears on 3 levels:

table 1: SH within peace movements:

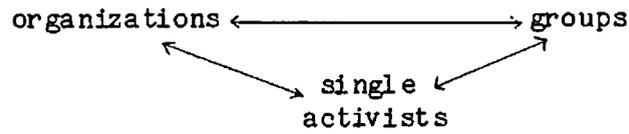


table 2: SH within single states:

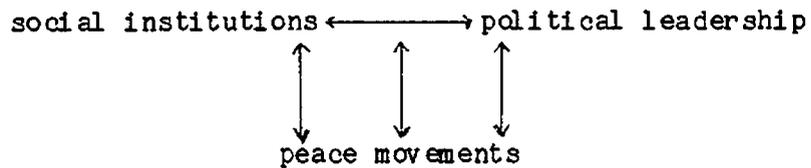
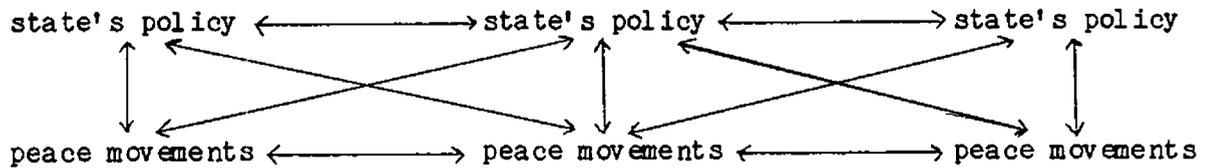


table 3: SH between states:



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