



Handicraft from Lurigancho prison.

Support for People's War Echoes on Every Continent

The people's war being led by the Communist Party of Peru has found an echo on every continent. A determined international campaign has spread and organized support for that war, and in so doing has helped change political conditions in many countries.

The Worldwide Campaign to Support the People's War in Peru involved dozens of major public meetings in capitals and other cities around the world, as well as other forms of meetings and discussions. There have been reports about activities in Austria, Bangladesh, Britain, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, France, Holland, India, Italy, Kurdistan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and West Germany.

Even more remarkable than the geographical range of this campaign was its unabashedly revolutionary character — a campaign in support of a revolutionary war being led by the Communist Party of Peru as a conscious and proud part of the in-

ternational struggle to do away with all imperialism and reaction and bring about a world free of classes. There has not been another international campaign quite like this in recent years.

These meetings had a common report, "Summing Up Five Years of People's War in Peru and the Current Political Situation," prepared and in numerous cities delivered by a Peruvian residing abroad who closely follows the situation. This comrade also prepared an extensive slide show on this subject. In addition there was a mini-exhibition of revolutionary art and posters from Peru, many of them done by revolutionary prisoners of war. The most commented-upon piece, without a doubt, was a large and intricate multicoloured rug celebrating the 1984 foundation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, woven by prisoners at Lima's Fronton island prison for the Committee of the RIM. (The Communist Party of Peru is a participating party of

the RIM.) A cassette of revolutionary songs recorded in the Callao women's prison also contributed to infusing these meetings with the spirit and content of the Peruvian revolution.

The activities in Bangladesh were a particularly successful example of the carrying out of both legal and illegal work, which was an important element of the campaign.

A report on the campaign there said, "The people of Bangladesh know little about Peru — a country of the other hemisphere. Even the progressive left intellectual circles of this country had long had little acquaintance with the great mass armed uprising and advancing war of the people under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru. During the last year *A World To Win* spread among intellectuals information about the great people's war in Peru.... Up until now almost no reports on the people's war were published in the legal information media. Even the imperialist slander-

ing of the Peruvian reality had not reached our country. The imperialists and reactionaries practised the tactic of silence about the revolution in Peru.”

Reports from both the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) and the Communist Party of Bangladesh (BSD[M-L]), participating parties of the RIM which are both underground, describe how they “jointly distributed a few thousand leaflets in different urban and rural areas and especially amongst the workers, peasants, students and intellectuals; in some places they carried out propaganda with posters, wall-writings, etc. Alongside these the PBSP printed a separate leaflet and distributed it in the rural areas especially amongst the peasants of areas where armed struggle is going on. Encouraged and inspired by the heroic advancement of the people’s war in Peru, the people of these areas became more confident of the prospect of their own revolutionary armed struggles.... The glorious episode of the people’s war in Peru has among our ranks created much enthusiasm and inspiration....” (From the PBSP account) A “World Mass Solidarity Council” comprised of progressive and left workers, students and cultural organisations held public mass meetings and seminars in four cities in Bangladesh. An average of 400-500 people took part in each. Three were on university campuses, involving high school students as well as local university students and other forces, and one, in a union headquarters, was attended mainly by industrial workers as well as students who came from far away to participate and support the people’s war and the RIM. At this union hall the art show “drew huge fistfuls of spectators from almost dawn to dusk.”

“Despite the hindrances faced by the Peru campaign — that it was an altogether unfamiliar and new issue...[and that] a great number of sincere patriots and intellectuals are being misled by pro-Deng revisionism, these are the very sections of the people where the campaign is creating repercussions... In Rangpur town the local unit of the student front of a pro-Moscow social-democratic political party, the JSD,

defied the so-called father organisation and actively cooperated to ‘support the people’s war in Peru’.... Some pro-Moscow and pro-Deng revisionist agents tried in vain to disrupt the meeting at Rajshahi University. They raised nonsense questions like ‘who said the present Chinese party is revisionist’ and ‘prove with data and information that the Soviet Union is a social-imperialist country.’ But the speakers instantly rebuffed them with correct data and information. As the (revisionists) left the venue with their tail between their legs, the listeners praised the initiators and became more interested to know about Mao Tsetung Thought and the people’s war in Peru. It can be mentioned in this connection that in the not-too-distant past Maoist revolutionary and left politics had a good influence in this part of the country but due to the fact that the persons concerned degraded to pro-Deng revisionism, that influence got eroded. Recently revolutionary politics and activities are getting stronger in the area.”

The rally at Dhaka University was presided over by a renowned intellectual and educator, a retired department head, who declared, “We support the people’s war in Peru because we feel the necessity of a similar type revolutionary movement in our country” (quoted from the BSD[M-L] account). This rally on a campus lawn was sponsored by nine different organisations including several worker and peasant groups as well as student groups and other prominent professors.

In the U.S. the Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru sponsored mass meetings in five cities, involving a total of about 1000 people, both politically active forces from among the middle classes and some people from among the lower masses (including a large number of Spanish-speaking people from Mexico and Central America). These programmes took place in the mainly Black and proletarian city of Richmond in the San Francisco Bay Area and in a Central American neighborhood in San Francisco where there is a lot of political activity (there was also a smaller meeting in the nearby town of Watsonville

involving cannery workers on strike and others); in an immigrant area of Los Angeles; in San Diego, near the Mexican border; at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; and New York City, where there was a discussion in French involving Haitians as well as a major Spanish-English meeting which drew a wide variety of people of different classes and nationalities.

Altogether about 2000 people participated in Europe. Perhaps the most noteworthy was a programme in Paris attended by over 400 people of the most varied nationalities and ages, including many Iranians, Latin Americans and Africans, a contingent of 60 workers from Turkey, as well as an impressive number of French people given current political conditions in France. Many people remarked that Paris hadn’t seen a major explicitly revolutionary programme like it in years, nor had Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought recently enjoyed such a broad audience.

In Paris, in Scandinavia and in a whole series of cities in West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe a certain sense arose in political circles that “the Maoists are back” and from now on have to be reckoned with. At the same time, because of the prestige won by the people’s war in Peru among revolutionary-minded people in the broadest sense, other political forces came forward to organise and participate in the campaign, including somewhat anarchist (autonomous) elements with influence among important strata of revolutionary-minded youth who have been isolated from Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Their participation was facilitated by the revolutionary character of the campaign and the way in which unity was sought (on the basis of supporting the war the PCP is leading, rather than simply “supporting human rights” on the one hand or having to be in agreement with the overall line of the PCP or the RIM on the other).

For these reasons many of these meetings enjoyed a much broader audience than has often been the case recently. Many of the question-and-debate sessions were long and



Mass meeting to support people's war in Peru, Dhaka University.

lively. They centred on questions such as is a revolutionary party necessary or desirable, what is the role and character of a united front, what is the road to revolution in the oppressed countries and how is it different from the imperialist countries, what is revisionism and whether or not upholding Mao Tsetung can be considered a dividing line between Marxism and revisionism, the criticism made by some people of what they call the "cult of the personality," and many specific questions about the line and experience of the PCP.

An important element in many of these countries was the role played by small groups of revolutionary immigrants, including especially proletarians from Turkey. When led by a revolutionary line, these forces were often able to activate both other immigrant masses and European-born revolutionaries as well, including both youth and older veterans who felt left on the beach when the Sixties tide receded. Such a potent combination testifies to the potential of a clear revolutionary line in such countries and also shows how the influence of events elsewhere (such as the people's war in Peru in this case, with its specific political and ideological content, as well as the training immigrant forces have received in the context of the political movements in their home countries, and the rising revolu-

tionary tide in the world in general) can become a powerful internal factor among certain strata of Western European society.

The campaign in the Dominican Republic involved small, well-organised clandestine meetings, accompanied by a large-scale circulation of a pamphlet reprinting *A World to Win* articles on Peru and extensive leafleting and postering. It was reported that no political activist in the country remained untouched by the campaign. In this way it had an especially refreshing and significant impact in a situation of governmental instability, recurring mass outbreaks and sharp political crisis among the legal left whose electoral politics have recently held hegemony in the political movement there. The revolutionary situation in neighboring Haiti also helped charge the atmosphere in which this campaign took place and heightened the seriousness with which Dominican and some Haitian revolutionaries discussed and debated the Peruvian experience in order to solve urgent problems.

In Colombia, where the pro-Soviet revisionists and some other political forces have built up large armies, and where the government and the pro-Soviet forces have been jockeying for advantage in the course of a reactionary "truce and democratic opening," the campaign, the line of the PCP and the

line of the RIM provoked important discussions on the nature of people's war versus other forms of armed struggle which have become notorious in Colombia, as well as on the question of self-reliance versus depending on Cuba or the USSR for arms, the question of a party and of a united front, two-line struggle, revisionism and on the RIM itself. A series of small and medium-sized private meetings took place in four different cities and on a banana plantation, where there was a secret, lantern-lit programme and deep discussion in the midst of the night in a region where the reactionary armed forces maintain permanent vigilance.

This campaign initiated by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement was an important step forward in carrying out an international joint campaign on a revolutionary basis. It has helped deepen and widen the revolutionary movement in those countries where the revolutionary forces are preparing to contest for state power by force of arms, according to the path of revolution and the conditions in different countries, and it has played a similar role in countries where such revolutionary armed struggle is already a reality.

This campaign apparently had some effect on the enemy as well. A series of wild and lurid but vicious tales concocting some connection between this campaign and Libya have been circulated in the German and French press and especially the press in Peru (and then reprinted elsewhere as "facts" proved by the fact that they appeared in a newspaper). The imperialist media which blacked out and slandered the people's war in Peru for so long can no longer call it "isolated," either in Peru or the rest of the world, nor can they so easily lie about its character as they once did. So this latest round of lies directed at the international campaign to support the people's war in Peru indicates both something of the degree to which the campaign has been successful and also the fact that it has been and will be even more sharply an arena of class struggle. □