

Attention, War Danger!

ROMESH CHANDRA

THE peace forces share the common concern of the peoples of the world over the war danger, the attacks on all the gains of detente, the chilly blasts of the new cold war, the continuing hunger and poverty in the world. But the peace forces are not only concerned, they are not only alarmed, they are not only anxious. The peace forces share the firm and unshakable belief that they have the power and strength to halt the war danger, to stop the arms build-up and restore the climate of detente.

The decade of the seventies was rightly hailed as the Decade of Detente, of new victories for peace, for international security, for national independence. It was the decade of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and all that meant for Europe and for the world. The seventies—this decade of victories, this decade of detente—saw the glorious victories of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea, the victories of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia. The seventies equally saw the great victories and advances in Latin America, and at the end of the decade the great victories of Nicaragua and Grenada.

Equally, this decade of the seventies saw the end of fascism in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Detente meant new advances in the struggles for liberation and for the defence and the sovereignty of countries which became a marked feature of the decade. The Palestine Liberation Organisation grew in strength and won the recognition due to it by the United Nations and by the overwhelming majority of the governments of the world.

The liberation movements of Southern Africa rose to new heights with Zimbabwe winning its independence early this year.

South Africa and Namibia, under the leadership of the African National Congress and of SWAPO, scored ever new successes during the seventies. The Polisario Front advanced in its battle and won the solidarity of ever growing masses everywhere. And the struggle against fascist reactionary dictatorship in Latin America grew; in Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Guatemala, Puerto Rico and now in El Salvador, the struggle advanced as never before.

The Nonaligned Movement grew to new heights, retained its unity and marched forward with the success of the Sixth Summit in Havana.

These were the seventies. This was the Decade of Detente. This was the decade of victories for peace and national independence.

Today the enemies of peace and national independence, the forces of imperialism and war seek to make the eighties the decade of the reversal of all these gains and successes and advances of the seventies. They seek to make the eighties the decade of confrontation, of arms buildup, of war.

The peoples of the world observed in May 1980 the 35th anniversary of the victory over Hitler fascism and the end of the second world war in Europe. The peace forces recalled this great victory with a sense of pride in the heroism and courage of all those who participated in that great struggle. They thought above all of those who gave their lives to defend the world against the menace of fascism. They paid homage to all, particularly to the twenty million sons and daughters of the great Soviet Union who made the supreme sacrifice and by doing so saved the whole world from the terrible scourge of Hitler fascism.

At the same time the peace forces pledged anew that there shall not be a third world war.

Thirty-five years, they say, without war in Europe—that itself is a great success and of great importance. Thirty-five years without a world conflagration—that itself is something for which we can be grateful to all the peace forces, the governments and the peoples, which have fought for peace.

But we never forget that these thirty-five years have also been years in which imperialism and reaction have taken the lives of millions in what they call "limited wars" and "local wars"—but which in reality were wars of aggression carried out by them.

Nowadays some people talk rather glibly of the possibilities of what they call "a limited nuclear war". Only ten per cent would die, they say, twenty per cent, twenty five per cent—and they argue among each other with the help of so-called "statistics". Why is this being done? Why do they want us to start discussing whether it will be ten or twenty per cent? Because they want us to accept that there can be a limited nuclear war which will not touch us but which can be waged against a black people or a brown people or some other people of some other colour somewhere far away, all in the interest of some supreme aim of those who are trying to wage such a nuclear war.

We believe that the proponents of such concepts are the proponents of a ghoulis and diabolical plan. It is not just a question of whether you can look with equanimity at the figures they give of so many millions who would perish—it is much worse than that: because they seek to get us accustomed to the idea that now nuclear weapons can be used in a limited way.

EDITORIAL

It is necessary to fight this dangerous concept.

We firmly believe that at this time it is necessary to prevent the disaster which would follow the so-called "first use" of nuclear weapons in any part of the world.

We do not accept these diabolical suggestions that we should be happy that only a small percentage of people would die. Are these men who speak like this or are they hyenas, who come forward with such devilish calculations, false calculations, deliberately false? They are trying to say to their own people: do not worry, you will be all right. It will be the other hundred million who will die.

We fight this concept. We in the peace movement fight this concept by spreading the truth, which has to be told, and by using the power which the people have.

Ordinary people in every part of the world understand this well. They understand why this concept is preached, and who does it and why.

It is said that that great proponent of the firm line, Mr. Brzezinski went to the right place for preaching such concepts, to Peking. And he assured the allies in Peking that they were quite right when they spoke of the possibility of war only killing a certain number of people.

What is the aim of all this? Does he not know the truth? He knows it very well. Why are new statistics being produced every day by so-called scientists, special study groups set up by the United States administration, which produce ever new figures about how many would perish at the first strike, and how many at the second, and how many would survive?

The armed attack carried out by the United States army against the independent Islamic Republic of Iran in April last, under the pretext of rescuing the American hostages from the U.S. embassy in Teheran, could have led to a major catastrophe. The aggressive attack against Iran was merely a high point in the vast arms build-up by the United States and its closest allies, the most aggressive circles of NATO, China and Japan.

The U.S. arms build-up is not confined to any one continent, it extends from Europe to the Indian Ocean, to the Persian Gulf, to the Caribbean—to every part of the world.

The heart of the global plans of imperialism and NATO is precisely Europe,

but one should not under-estimate what is happening in the Caribbean or in the Indian Ocean.

Europe remains today the central point in the aggressive plans of the Washington-NATO-Peking-Tokyo axis. This axis is threatening the peace of the world in all the continents.

The problems of peace and security and disarmament are of concern to all peoples of all continents. Detente in Europe, the Helsinki spirit in Europe, provided for every people in every continent new strength for its own struggles, for independence, for sovereignty, for social progress, for the ending of hunger and poverty. The attack on detente, the attack on the Helsinki spirit, the deployment of missiles in Europe, the creation of a climate of confrontation in Europe, naturally weakens the struggles of all peoples in all countries.

The need for calling a Conference for Disarmament and Military Detente in Europe has become a great necessity.

The need of the hour is to unite all the efforts which are being undertaken by the most diverse forces in the world against the danger of war and against those who are responsible for creating this danger through the vast arms build-up.

The point is this: this is not the time to quarrel and fight in regard to a hundred different matters on which we differ. The World Peace Council has its clear-cut anti-imperialist positions. Every one knows them.

But if we are to succeed at this time, if we are to respond to the urgency of today and not merely pay lip-service to it, we need to build the broadest unity of all who are concerned.

Therefore, the World Peace Council wishes to appeal to all who are concerned and who have a different appreciation of the causes which lie at the root of the present situation—who have maybe even opposite views to ours. We say to them: we must come together and work together, regardless of the differences which do divide us but which must be laid aside at this time. Let us work together. You know our positions and we know yours. We belong to different political parties. We are proud of our positions, and we believe that we are right. But at this time the only thing that is right is to be able to launch the broadest common actions together with

the widest range of those who are opposed to this stepping up of the war danger.

We can do this in all countries. In some NATO countries there is deep concern among several governmental parties and major opposition parties. There is a strong wish to stop this dangerous drift. In the United States of America, inside the administration itself, there are those who are concerned and who understand that by themselves they cannot halt this drift.

The peoples of the world have the power to stop it, not the peoples of the world divided but the peoples of the world exerting their united strength. Today the real possibilities exist, and we must use these possibilities.

Do not be afraid of keeping the doors of the peace movement wide open. On the contrary, as we often say: let us go out into the streets and bring in others through those open doors.

The Presidential Committee of the World Peace Council in Budapest in May last gave a call to all who are concerned, to all who are anxious in view of the perilous moves to weaken detente, to whip up the cold war, to all who are concerned at the hunger and poverty as a result of the arms race, to all who are concerned at the dangers which exist today, to fight against the war danger.

The Budapest Appeal called on the peace forces to rebuff the challenge of those who were accelerating the arms race which led to the opening of the way to war. "War is not inevitable. It is not yet too late to put an end to the unbridled accumulation of armaments. It is not yet too late to outlaw the establishment of new nuclear arsenals, especially in the heart of Europe; but it is high time to finish with the policy of violence and the threats of blockades, embargos, boycotts and military provocations... Neither ideology nor differences in opinion or belief must impede open dialogue and concerted action by all those who are concerned by the fast-deteriorating international situation."

Let us open the dialogue. This is what the Budapest Appeal says to the world. Let us march together against the war danger! The peoples have the power to halt the war danger! Let us use that power, with confidence and optimism!