
Conference Report

Pugwash staggers at ABM defense policy

by Liliana Gorini-Celani

Venice, more decadent and oligarchist than ever, was the setting when the 33rd Pugwash conference opened on Aug. 26. It was characterized this year by heated polemics kindled among the organizers and participants by Lyndon LaRouche's document "Soviet Union Threatens Preventive Nuclear War" (see *EIR*, Sept. 5), and by a protest demonstration called by the European Labor Party against this latest secretive encounter of "KGB spies."

The European Labor Party's initiative, which won considerable support from citizens and tourists concerned about the anti-American and pro-Soviet direction in which the wind is blowing in Europe, made the self-styled Pugwashites lose their composure, so much so that they felt the need to cancel a perfectly normal press conference called by *EIR* at the same hotel where many organizers and participants in the conference were staying.

Some of the statements made at the opening—the only public session, preceding the actual, "secret" work of the conference—shed light on why the Pugwash gentlemen became so worked up. *EIR*'s request for a comment on the fact that only days earlier in Erice, Sicily, eminent scientists like Edward Teller had demonstrated the feasibility of beam weapons as a defense against nuclear missiles, drew a curt reply from Prof. Edoardo Amaldi of the CERN in Geneva, the high-energy research institute with, as *EIR* has previously reported, a strong KGB aroma to it. Snapped Amaldi: "We will discuss beam weapons only in the closed session, and we have no intention of talking about them in public."

Amaldi then hastily turned over the floor to a spokesman for the Veneto region, which financed the conference with 180 million liras after the Italian government turned it down. But one member of the committee which will "secretly" work on beam weapons made his speech available. It says that "the scientists meeting in Erice would have done better to discuss the American freeze movement of Kennedy and Hatfield instead of beam weapons, because beam weapons 1) relaunch the arms race, 2) would absorb enormous amounts of money, 3) are considered impossible by most of the experts, and 4) even the optimists (cf. Reagan's speech on March 23) state

that they will not be ready in the short term." Evidently the Pugwashites overlook the fact that at Erice, the time-frame mentioned was five years.

The same committee spokesman, who identified himself as a representative of the "dove technocrats" of the Pugwash movement, admitted that the Pugwash experts on beam weapons, among them the Americans Kosta Tsipis, Richard Garwin, and Italy's Carlo Shaerf and Francesco Calogero, are planning to cook up a document against the defense system stating that the path of total disarmament of the West is much safer.

Supporters of the Pugwash "pacifists," according to executive committee member Kaplan, include Robert McNamara—also noted as the butcher of Vietnam, and Henry Kissinger—whose pacifism was shown by the massacres in Chile and Central America. At the press conference where Kaplan announced the Pugwash work for this year, it was impossible to get a straight answer on obvious scientific topics like laser beams. When a journalist asked for a comment on Erice, the nervous reply came: "The Erice meeting does not count, it was only physicists; we are high-level, we have been meeting constantly and not once a year, and we draw up reports that influence governments."

To their consternation the Pugwash participants were forced to notice that this year their usual secrecy had eroded. Near the door leading out of the sumptuous Doges' Palace in St. Mark's Square, which hosted the conference, 10 or so European Labor Party members picketed with a huge banner reading "Welcome to Pigwash," posters which underlined the pro-Soviet KGB character of the meeting, and even a bearded Orthodox Russian monk who greeted the Pugwashites, to the great delight of the passersby, by chanting: "Peace, tovarisch, peace, let us destroy the West together, yes, yes, peace," and blessing them with his Greek cross. Some American wives of Pugwashites tried to tackle the "Orthodox monk" after their attempt to correct the "spelling error" on the banner went unheeded. One Danish group from the conference grabbed the LaRouche paper and blurted epithets against LaRouche. More self-controlled, a Venetian noblewoman asked for an extra copy for the wife of a Soviet delegate, who "is my houseguest."

The vendetta was not long in coming. Right after the working sessions began, *EIR* called a press conference at the luxury Hotel Bauer to explain the actual background of Pugwash. The numerous journalists who attended had to hear *EIR* correspondent Marco Fanini on their feet outside the hotel: The management had suddenly withdrawn the room.

The scandalized journalists took note of Fanini's denunciations of this incredible and anti-democratic act. He explained that there is an obvious clash between the Pugwash movement's demand for total disarmament by the West, and LaRouche's conception which asks for a defensive shield against nuclear missiles. "We think that the Pugwash movement is working exclusively in Russia's interests. While Kaplan states that beam weapons are not realizable, in the U.S.S.R. they have been under development since 1962."