

When the Spirit is Lacking

In the age of globalisation toilers and their representatives are supposed to think globally. Strangely enough, this isn't what's happening, particularly in the South where the social and economic impact of globalisation is getting worse with every passing day. Gone are the days of international solidarity. Even communists cannot think of any affirmative action beyond their national frontiers. Internationalism is a closed chapter in their vocabulary. 18 July this year marked the 72nd anniversary of the beginning of the great civil war in Spain. The fascists in Spain, led by General Franco attacked the republic and unleashed a reign of terror with a view to destroying the forces of Republic and Democracy. Aided by the military might of fascist Mussolini and German Nazis Franco succeeded in winning the war and the republic got defeated. But even in defeat what the progressives throughout the world gained enormously was unique—internationalism and how to build international solidarity.

To the heroic anti-fascist struggle, organised by the Communist Party of Spain, the then Soviet Union true to its commitment to international brotherhood, rendered material, political and moral support. Spanish Civil War created a situation in which the famous International Brigades set a noble example by fighting Franco's fascist forces on the front. They lost the war because of a combination of external factors.

The Spanish Republic of 1936 is history. So is revolutionary passion generated by the International Brigades and the organisations that were instrumental in forming the International Brigades in the first place. Anti-fascist forces fought heroically and lost but they wrote a new chapter on internationalism and international solidarity. Even after seven decades the Republic, the Communist Party of Spain, the Communist International, the Soviet Communist Party and Stalin have been, and continue to be, the targets of campaign of vilification. But the other side of the story is no less encouraging as Spanish Civil War continues to inspire internationalists.

Fascism means war. And in the context of Spanish Civil War, there is every reason to hope for a grand anti-fascist solidarity movement across the globe during the fascist war of aggression against any country. To some extent America's Vietnam War galvanised democrats, liberals and progressives on the left to raise voice against American barbarism, though not in a way the Spanish Civil War did. Communists and socialists in all the continents failed miserably to build up an anti-war movement against Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Bush bombed Iraq literally to the stone age and yet no sustained campaign against medieval brutalities of America emerged in any part of the globe. And Bush has virtually started his final war against Iran. It may be too late for progressives to miss yet another opportunity to develop a broad-based anti-fascist platform to save humanity from nuclear holocaust.

In the case of Vietnam, serious resistance began in America itself several years after Kennedy's invasion of South Vietnam. The solidarity movement that took a popular shape with international dimension did not develop this time despite catastrophe created by Bush-Chenney-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz in Iraq.

For one thing war against Iran is going to be nuclear. In the 1970s Iran was under the rule of a brutal tyrant who the United States and Britain had imposed by force in a military coup overthrowing the democratic government. Iran was then very much in America's strategic orbit in the middle east. And Washington encouraged Iran to develop nuclear capacities and nuclear power and so on, which means a step short of nuclear weapons. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology reportedly trained Iranian nuclear engineers. Nobody even in the American administration even remotely raised any objection. Because the Iranian ruling circles were then an ally of America. So Iranian nuclear programme was fine, as it was the case with Pakistan during the anti-Soviet crusade. Iran is an enemy now. So their nuclear programme, even if it is for peaceful nuclear energy purpose, it cannot be anything but dangerous. And the entire propaganda machine of America is working overtime to demonise Iran. Indications are that Pakistan may go the Iran way, hopefully not in the distant future.

Democrats and Republicans do not differ when it is the question of establishing American supremacy. War on Iran may be delayed but it is very much on the card.

By any standards Iran issue is international and it deserves international response from peace marchers. International solidarity action, protest movements and moral support—they are what matter really, and if the human race is not to collapse anti-fascist forces must think beyond their borders in the spirit of International Brigades that took part in the great Spanish Civil War 72 years ago. □□□