

FIRST BLOOD

8 Death and violence in Genoa may mark a permanent split in the ranks of the anti-globalization movement. Radical hooligans, says one moderate, 'have hijacked the whole thing.' BY CHRISTOPHER DICKEY AND ROD NORDLAND

FOR THE FIRST FEW HOURS, IT looked like the usual fare—if a bit more fierce this time. Like a regular weather pattern, so-called anti-globalization protesters have descended on every major economic meeting since Seattle, 1999. Now Genoa too was engulfed in tear gas and shouts of rage, in hailstorms of rock-throwing at police. Surging crowds of demonstrators, many of them wearing helmets and masks, engaged in a game of attack-and-retreat with police as they sought to disrupt the G8 summit taking place in Genoa's cordoned-off city center.

For those caught up in the vast melee, it felt like war and revolution, with burning barricades and pitched close-quarter street fighting. Dumpsters were pressed into service as makeshift tanks, pushed by demonstrators toward phalanxes of Italy's paramilitary police, the *carabinieri*. Shopping carts stolen from supermarkets, first employed to carry bottles of water for thirsty demonstrators, were soon ferrying paving stones to the battle lines. Cars were tipped over and set on fire, shop windows smashed; the smoke mingled with clouds of tear gas. Demonstrators who professed nonviolence donned swimming goggles and painters' masks against the swirling fumes and wrapped their bodies in foam rubber, cardboard and packing tape before charging to the front. Filled with gasoline, their water bottles made Molotov cocktails.

Suddenly, at about 3:30 p.m. Friday, as the cops fell back one more time against a crowd's assault, a lone police jeep found itself cut off.

Swerving, in panic, it came up against a wall of broken windows and the scrawled graffiti, NO MORE COPS. Young men with homemade plastic shields quickly surrounded the vehicle. One smashed a long piece of lumber through one of its windows. When 23-year-old Carlo Giuliani, a history student from Genoa with a black balaclava over his head, hoisted a fire extinguisher and started to throw it through the broken rear window, an officer inside aimed his 9mm Beretta 92 service pistol and fired twice. Giuliani fell, shot through the head. The driver jammed into reverse—running the young man over.

With that, everything changed. It was the anti-globalization movement's first blood, and the radicals' first martyr. Astonishingly, under the circumstances, some protest leaders denounced the death as murder, blaming police brutality and decrying "provocateurs" in their midst. Yet most other demonstrators were appalled by the violence—and were determined to make the movement's first blood its last. Genoa may thus mark a turning point for the two-year-old protest movement. What began as a motley if united collection of causes—from save-the-earth greens to labor unionists—could well now rupture into a permanent schism, pitting moderates who seek constructive debate against radicals who seek only confrontation. "It shouldn't happen like this," former rocker Bob Geldof, famed for his Live Aid concerts in the '80s, remarked to U2 singer and Third World-debt activist Bono as the two attended a meeting on the fringes of the protests. A downcast Bono later said that their cause had been "making headway before this."

Indeed it had. Ironically, the violence overshadowed what world leaders considered real accomplishments—and many protesters agreed.

African heads of state joined the G8 presidents and prime ministers as they announced \$1.2 billion in new money to fight AIDS. Drop the Debt spokesmen Bono and Geldof met with several world leaders to discuss relief of the debt burden on the world's poorest countries. President George W. Bush floated a debt-relief proposal, stressing grants over loans. "Of all the days to destroy," Bono said of the violent demonstra-

tors, "they destroyed a day when there was some dialogue going on." His group called off its participation in the march. So did the Catholic aid agency CAFOD. "We represent the millions of people who have no voice. That is no longer possible under these circumstances," said CAFOD spokeswoman Fleur Anderson. That was a big disappointment for a protest that started out with the blessing of the local cardinal, Dionigi Tettamanzi, and even tacit approval from Pope John Paul II.

After Genoa, the question is how badly damaged the movement is—and whether moderates can advance the gains they have made so far. The problem for would-be peaceful protesters is their seeming powerlessness against the radicals. Violence gets attention; words and good intentions often do not. And what became crystal clear at Genoa is the fact that increasing numbers of groups such as the Black Blocs—shadowy groups of activists so extreme that even anarchists denounce them—don't seem much interested in social change. Like soccer hooligans, they come out to rumble, spoiling for a fight. Increasingly, they have attracted young acolytes like Giuliani, himself part of a "civil-disobedience march" that had pledged peaceful confrontation.

Many moderates now say their movement is being subverted, if not destroyed, by such troublemakers. Dismayed by events, and their inability to be heard above the clash of police shields and tear-gas shells, many thousands of peaceful protesters simply left Genoa. Others, seeing the handwriting on the wall, elected not to come at all. Naomi Klein, the guru of the "No Logo" movement and one of the protesters' most visible international leaders, stayed away for fear of an incident just like this one. "I'm very glad I am not there," said Angharad Penrhyn-Jones, an Earth First activist from Wales who has been to several anti-globalization protests. Hooligans, she said, "have come along and hijacked the whole thing. We need to ask ourselves, what our role is now? If these events are go-

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ing to attract this kind of people, maybe we shouldn't go to them." Even moderates swearing gamely to fight on recognize the dangers. "The risk of mixing up our message with those who use violence is there," acknowledged Adrian Lovett of Drop the Debt. "But in the end we don't think we should give up to people with extreme agendas—or no agendas at all."

Genoa's authorities—and much of the rest of the world, watching mystified from afar—could be forgiven for not recognizing such distinctions. Mindful of the violence in Goteborg, scene of another bloody summit just last month, their job was to protect the summiteers in Genoa's ancient Ducal Palace from any similar distractions. The historic center of the city, with its twisting cobblestone alleyways and gracious palazzos, was designated the "Red Zone." Walled off by reinforced steel fences 13 feet high, and further guarded by an outer wall of steel shipping containers, the zone was off-limits to everyone except police and summit participants. The airport, train stations and even major highway exits were closed amid security precautions so stringent that two thirds of Genoa's 650,000 residents opted to leave town. Flooding in to replace them were upwards of 100,000 protesters from throughout Europe and the United States. Many more would have come if the Italians hadn't taken the unprecedented step of suspending the Schengen Treaty on a borderless Europe. Italian authorities systematically turned back thousands of people who were on police watch lists—or who had long hair, tattoos or body piercings.

None of those extraordinary measures proved effective, any more than Italy's ballyhooed policy of "zero tolerance" toward the protests. The Red Zone simply became a target that demonstrators were determined to penetrate. The police crackdown resulted only in more attacks on police, not to mention cars, shops and property throughout the city. G8 leaders personally expressed regret at the violence—in contrast to President Bush, who initially sent out a spokesman to mouth similar platitudes. There was no question of canceling the summit, but G8

leaders did put discussion of future ones on the agenda. "We are like the armored Eight," said the event's host, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. "At the next G8 summit, if there is a next G8 summit, we're going to have to make significant changes." And French President Jacques Chirac suggested that events of the week showed that the industrialized nations "must do a better job listening."

That's good news to moderate protest leaders, who never had any intention of shutting down the Genoa meetings. Far from it. They sought dialogue. Vittorio Agnoletto, an Italian AIDS activist, leads the Genoa Social Forum, uniting nearly a thousand widely differing anti-globalization groups. "We don't need another Seattle now," he said in Milan weeks before the G8 meeting, seeking to pre-empt violence. "We think we have such big ideas about the world that every act of violence hurts the movement." Agnoletto pushes such less-than-head-thumping ideas as therapies for AIDS and an abolition of Third World debt. Other moderates are similarly non-confrontational. The French group AITAC,

headed by Bernard Cassen and Susan George, advocates taxing international capital flows to

more fairly distribute global income. José Bove of Confédération Paysanne defends the interests of "indigenous peoples."

Such themes got lost in Genoa. As activists began filtering into Genoa, most especially the younger ones, many gravitated to the more radical groups such as the now-notorious Tute Bianche, or "white overalls." Ostensibly allied with the forum, they had an odd idea of nonviolence. "We will break into the Red Zone," leader Luca Casarini promised, as his activists busily crafted body armor. They erected huge mobile shields of heavy plexiglass and chain, and held training sessions in which groups of tough young men posed as police and attacked phalanxes of protesters. "We didn't have a single offensive weapon," Casarini claimed after the first day's violence. But many of his followers were quick to pick up rocks, sticks and metal bars as they marched on the town like so many barbarians at a castle's gates.

The Forum's Agnoletto blamed the initial outbreak of violence on the Black Blocs, whose modus operandi is to infiltrate more moderate groups and launch attacks that provoke police into attacking them. In Genoa, small bands of Blocs, dressed in characteristic black balaclavas, roamed the streets, attacking "corporate" big-media journalists, trashing banks, setting cars on

fire and even trying to break into the Genoa prison. (The Italian TV network RAI described Giuliani, the dead protester, as a Black Bloc follower. His father, a labor-union activist, denied it.) Such hooligans, Agnoletto said, "are at most 1,000; we are 60,000 peaceful protesters."

Yet what to do? Abandoning the protests hands another sort of victory to the trouble-makers. On the other hand, no responsible group wants to invite its followers to a bloodbath. Small wonder that when Lucy Matthew announced that Drop the Debt would cancel its participation in Genoa's marches, she was in tears. "It's awful, just awful," she said. "This is one of the worst weekends I can remember for a long time." The anti-globalization movement, it seems, has lost its innocence.

With MARTHA BRANT in the Red Zone and
BARBIE NADEAU in Rome

