

October 1970

10 cents

INTERNATIONAL 17

For Workers Power Self-Management Socialism

Defend the Palestinian Revolution



GET THEE BEHIND ME STALIN

The Easter 1970 Congress of the
Communist Party

Moratorium Sept., 1970

Letter from Prague

INTERNATIONAL

For Workers' Power, Self-Management and Socialism

editorial address: A. McLean, P.O. Box 13, Balmain, N.S.W., Australia 2041

published by the revolutionary marxist group in australia
dedicated to the revolutionary marxist tendency of the fourth international

CONTENTS

No. 17 (new series)

THE EASTER 1970 COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS	page 1
PRAGUE LETTER	page 10
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION	page 14
AFTER THE SEPTEMBER MORATORIUM	page 17

INTRODUCTION

The news of President' Nasser's death has managed to divert attention from the counter-revolutionary attack on the dispossessed Palestinians, who make up a majority of Jordan's population, by Hussein's reactionary armed forces.

Sparing nothing and nobody, including the wounded in hospitals, Hussein's forces have inflicted an estimated 20,000 casualties on the Palestinians, and they hold captive another 10,000, many of whom doubtless will be tortured and shot. Faced by overwhelming forces forces - there are 60,000 armed men in Hussein's army, backed by modern firepower and an airforce, compared to the 20,000 lightly armed Palestinians. - the Palestinian fedayeen fought doggedly and heroically according to all reports. As we go to press they still hold areas in the North of Jordan, but reports are now being published of the Jordanian butchers closing in on these areas. The ceasefire agreement signed in Cairo said vaguely that the towns and hamlets in the North were to "return to the status quo before the latest incidents." Whether "latest incidents" means the establishment of popular power in this region after an Army ambush of local fedayeen or the Jordanian Army's subsequent attacks on this liberated area, depends on the relationship of forces in the area. One cannot be optimistic in the short run.

As for the other Arab regimes -whether they be "feudal" or "bourgeois" - they did little or nothing to aid the Palestinians. When the massacre was nearly over Nasser was moved to a denunciation, and before that the Libyan regime broke off relations with Hussein. The Syrian regime was split, which meant that the pro-Palestinian wing gave some aid but that the other hostile wing could withhold the necessary air support and cover, and in collaboration with the Kremlin, force the pro-Palestinian wing to retrieve its forces from Northern Jordan where they were attacked in the open by Jordan ground forces and from the air.

The "truce" arranged in Cairo by the Arab heads-of-state tries to ensure that the Palestinians are permanently surrounded by the armed forces of regimes allied to U.S. Imperialism: Israel and Jordan. If the Palestinians threaten the one, the other will go to its aid.

The Palestinian revolution has been badly hit. The regime in Amman is now attempting to capture the leaders of the Palestinian Left. Rewards have been offered for the capture of Dr. Habbabah, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Nayef Hawatneh, leader of the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine - the revolutionary marxist vanguard of the Palestinian masses.

We publish in this issue a solidarity leaflet distributed in Sydney on Sept. 23rd by one of our comrades. When clashes occur in the future between Arab reaction, Zionism, and Imperialism on the one side, and the Palestinian and Arab masses, on the other, we hope to be able to arouse more substantial solidarity with the latter in their just struggles. Meanwhile, everything which organisations of the labor and socialist movement in Australia can do to save the lives and freedom of militants held by Hussein's forces should be done.

This issue opens with a critical look at the CPA's new programme - particularly its "popular frontism" and its failure to identify and emphasise the proletariat as the central revolutionary force and to outline how institutionally it exercises its power in a revolutionary situation and in the post-capitalist transitional society. Developments in the CPA continue to pre-occupy Revolutionary Marxists in Australia. Recently definite steps have been taken toward the formation of a pro-Russian, neo-stalinist C.P., while the leaders of the CPA majority continue to work out their new line, further widen the gap between themselves and the Kremlin leaders by inviting Roger Garaudy (expelled from the French CP because of his opposition to the invasion and "normalisation" in Czechoslovakia) to a lecture tour of Australia, and now hesitantly encourage a critical analysis of the CPA's history.

The analysis of the September Moratorium demonstration (smaller than in May and with a smaller proportion of workers) reiterates and develops our analysis of the first Moratorium demonstration. The opportunist dreams of CPers and "orthodox" Trotskyites alike, about an independent, mass, extra-parliamentary movement can now more clearly be seen to be dreams, and the importance of "entrism sui generis" in revolutionary strategy in present Australian conditions can be more clearly appreciated.

Finally we carry a letter from a revolutionary communist in Prague which reminds all socialist militants of the harsh and threatening purge going on in Czechoslovakia against the advocates of socialist democracy there.

1. 10. 70.

1 THE EASTER 1970 CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Evaluating its Line

FOR 40 ODD YEARS THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA CONFORMED TO THE POLITICAL LINE EMANATING FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

WITH THE RISE OF STALINISM THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE C.P.S.U. WAS THAT OF WATCHDOG OVER THE SELF-PRESERVATION INTERESTS OF THE PRIVILEGED BUREAUCRACY IN THE SOVIET UNION.

THIS SUBSERVIENT POSITION OF THE C.P.A. DID NOT NECESSARILY EXCLUDE ITS ADOPTING, ON OCCASIONS, A STANCE ON PARTICULAR ISSUES AKIN TO A REVOLUTIONARY-MARXIST POSITION.

The workers' state erected on the basis of the October 1917 revolution had not been overthrown and the degenerated Bolshevik Party, the political wing of the privileged bureaucracy, developed its long-enduring bonapartist role.

The privileged bureaucracy had its basis in the workers' state. Consequently this state had to be maintained.

The class struggle against capitalism externally played a major role in inhibiting imperialist counter-revolutionary intervention.

On the other hand, extension of the revolution to advanced industrial countries would have undermined the Soviet bureaucracy's position.

This, and its lack of confidence in the revolutionary potentiality of the proletariat and fear that its struggle would occasion imperialist attack on the Soviet Union, resulted in the political bureaucracy operating internationally to derail the revolutionary movement.

Nevertheless the unfolding achievement of the development potentialities of the workers' state could not but produce a groundswell against the frightful Stalinist regime --- hence its surfacing in the form of Khrushchev's secret speech.

The repercussions of this event are still being felt in the C.P.A. The political evolution of its leadership wing has proceeded further perhaps than that of any other C.P., permitting a degree of optimism for the possibility of its further evolution to a revolutionary-Marxist position consonant with the times.

But this happy outcome cannot be envisaged on the basis of a too-accommodating solidarity with its present position. Rather its possibility of meaningful advancement --- involving complete recognition that

exaggerations anent "the new stage of capitalism" cannot serve as cover for avoidance of examination and repudiation of its past --- depends upon its capacity to front up honestly to criticism of its eclectic position.

In this connection we offer some comments on the C.P.'s Easter 1970 Congress documents, "AIMS, METHOD AND ORGANISATION", and "MODERN UNIONISM AND THE WORKERS'S MOVEMENT".

x x x

In the first place both the Paris Commune and the proletarian revolution in Russia involved the concept that bourgeois democracy could not serve as the framework for the building of a new society. Rather, proletarian democracy was essential --- and its organisational form, the soviets. The beginning of the definitive revolutionary transformation of society waited on the assumption of political power by the soviets.

Is this up to now well-established concept among communists outmoded in a "new" situation? Some ideologists may think this is so. But a programmatic document cannot avoid this central question or, to be more lenient, may not be equivocal on it.

And here, to say the least, the C.P. documents are equivocal.

The following excerpts encompass the C.P.'s line on this question:

"Build a new society along these lines... and the privilege and power of wealth and foreign domination."

(Note: Euphemisms such as "privilege and power of wealth" are not suitable substitutes for "capitalist class rule" in such a document. "Foreign domination" here foreshadows the opportunist equation of Australia to a colonial country, in which latter the revolution begins as a national struggle, permitting a united front with the national bourgeoisie. Australia is a developed capitalist nation where whatever degree of "foreign domination" exists is by invitation and acquiescence of the Australian bourgeoisie.)

"The communists aim for socialist revolution without civil war.

"This can be realised only if there is an overwhelming mass opinion in favour and when this is associated with a great mass movement embracing all major social classes and groups --- and when the ruling circles are split."

(Note: The capitalist class is surely a major social class. It will not be in any movement for its own overthrowing. "Ruling circles" introduces the idea of an enemy other than the Australian bourgeoisie (see note above). Again there is no indication of the leading role of the proletariat. Further, the masses do not aim for socialist revolution --- they aim for concrete demands, some of which may be achievable only through revolution.)

"Great social transformations leading to a socialist society are

only possible through action by the majority of Australians when they feel passionately the need for it."

(Note: The role of the proletariat is still excluded. Further this and the quotation immediately above are not a realistic formula for revolution. There is no head-counting to establish a majority. In a revolutionary situation the proletariat has the leading role against its adversary, the bourgeoisie. Demonstration of its will to act and its will to power affects the attitude of the petty bourgeois masses, inducing at least neutrality as a sufficient pre-condition for proletarian success.)

"But not every such situation results in successful revolution.

"For this the mass movement must be sufficiently conscious.

"It needs also to be sufficiently organised to mount the mass struggle and exert the social force needed.

"Such revolutionary mass movements emerge to one degree or another spontaneously from various social groups and communities."

(Note: The same omission of the role of the proletariat.)

x x x

In seeming contrast to this central theme, we now quote the following:

"The Communist Party bases itself on the working class... on whose desire for change and willingness to fight for it any revolution depends."

"...because industrial workers are decisive in the strength they can bring to bear for social change, and because of their key position in the functioning of the economy."

"To arouse the working class to a greater awareness of this (the scientific and technological revolution), to encourage activities which challenge the present structure of society --- such is the task of the trade union movement." (In Modern Unionism..)

Note: The above quotations affirm the working class as the decisive social force. They still do not acknowledge its leading role and consequently its modus operandi in implementing its hegemonic role in the revolutionary struggle.)

This role is not spelled out in the documents from which we now quote the only nearly relevant points:

"...This requires the ability to discern and express elementary forms of the demand (for social control) --- rights of the workers to elect shop and job committees which can fully represent them, rights of job and union organisation to exert control over decisions affecting work, wages and hours, for the demand that company books be opened to give a true picture of profits, for example."

"Branches of such unions in each factory (or group of factories) with extensive autonomy and rights (democracy within the union), rights of entry, meetings on the job, etc;

"Shop committees and/or workers' councils with rights to intervene, and ultimately to decide on all issues affecting the workers in the factory, consultation before dismissal, right to inspection of books, etc."

These quotations show confusion on the role of factory committees vis-a-vid the unions. In them the roles of both are limited. Certainly it must be inferred that any co-ordinating role is reserved to the unions, with no perspective of linking together factory committees (i.e. soviets).

Factory committees (except such as exist in stable quiescent periods to provide representation on minimal questions) are in their true connotation possible only under conditions of increasing pressure by the masses and are elements of dual power inside the factory, the very appearance of which bears witness to the fact that the class struggle has overflowed the limits of the traditional organisations of the proletariat.

How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonised, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through soviets. These will unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. For this purpose, no one has yet proposed a different form of organisation; indeed, it would hardly be possible to think up a better one. Soviets are not limited to an a priori party programme. They throw open their doors to all the exploited. Through these doors pass representatives of all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. The organisation, broadening out together with the movement, is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of soviets, therefore, crowns the programme of transitional demands.

Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance, the Soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters, become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. If the factory committee creates a dual power in the factory, then the soviets initiate a period of dual power in the country.

Dual power in its turn is the culminating point of the transitional period. Two regimes, the bourgeois and the proletarian, are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Conflict between them is inevitable. Should the revolution be defeated --- the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie will follow. In case of victory --- the power of the soviets, that is the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, will arise.

x

x

x

Unions do not offer, and in line with their task, composition and manner of recruiting membership, cannot offer a finished revolutionary programme; in consequence, they cannot replace the political party.

To emphasise the documents' distance from the perspective of soviets, consider the following quotations:

"This consensus (mass acceptance of the establishment's ideas, etc.) has been assisted by... the increased power of the mass media... to popularise... illusions about parliamentary democracy and the two-party system..."

"Parliamentary democracy and the two-party system as these now function serve the interests of the establishment.

"This sham helps perpetuate illusions that political power is exercised by the people."

Nevertheless in contradistinction, the documents proclaim:

"Some form of parliament will be important in the new society" and

"Such representative bodies would still be needed, including an elected national parliament, which would make final decisions on national issues..."

If "All Power to the Soviets!" is to be jettisoned and "an elected national parliament" substituted (that is, if the essential of Marxism-Leninism is to be repudiated), then at least let this be stated explicitly!

x

x

x

Although not explicitly acknowledged, implicit in the documents' treatment of the Labor Party is recognition that this party remains the political leadership of the working class.

Instead of appreciating the workers' allegiance to their traditional party, that they will not abandon it except after a long experience in which its political inadequacy impresses their consciousness, and that consequently the process of significant political differentiation in the ranks of its adherents can best be assisted by adoption by vanguard formations of the policy of entrism of its own particular kind, the documents propose to build an alternative mass political leadership at this stage while standing outside the internal struggle in the mainstream of the labor movement.

Here are the pertinent excerpts:

"Today the Australian Labor Party offers itself as an alternative administration of capitalism."

(Note: It does no such thing. An objective appraisal confirms it as being such an alternative, but it does not offer itself as such, nor do its adherents believe this to be its role. The same assertion could be

made about the C.P., since every less-than-Leninist formation inhibits the revolutionary development of the proletariat, but its leaders and cadres would hotly deny it "offers" itself.)

"Reformism... proclaims the state to be above class, confines itself to working within the system and utilising forms and institutions that exist (arbitration courts, for example)."

(Note: As referring to the Labor Party this "proclaims" has as little validity as the assertion above. Again, omission of the Labor Party's adherence to parliamentarism as an example, is significant.)

The documents proceed to describe the position in the Labor Party accord with the bias against entrism:

"The dominance of reformist ideology, the organisational structures that contain the left and socialist forces or confine them to militant speeches in conferences.

"... a party leadership remote from members, and largely unaccountable to them, ... supporters who are merely asked to endorse policies....

"... a leader is not so dependent on the rank and file and need not take such heed of their pressures.

"Once even an electoral machine required many hands to take out a message which today is prepared by an advertising agency and distributed through a television set."

(Note: The subjectively motivated theme here is that the Labor Party machine gets along without any real dependance on rank and file allegiance and support, but through such devices as utilisation of advertising agencies and t.v. sets.

Reformist ideology predominates in the working class because of the long-time political inadequacy of the "left", including particularly when conditions were propitious for its development --- not because of the to-be-expected lack of a "fair go" from the right wing. Because of this, the "left and socialist forces" do not have a majority of union representatives at conference. Supplementary factors are that the "left" unions do not affiliate to the extent of their full membership and C.P. opposition to work in the branches, which should be the citadels of the left wing in this period. In these conditions the leadership is not out of tune with the party and the working class and does not operate in isolation from and in disregard of the rank and file as claimed above.)

"The Labor Party... includes some who believe in revolution and think that the Labor Party organisation can be transformed to achieve this."

(Note: The future will determine between revolutionaries who believe this and those who do not, and without the issue involving disastrous consequences. The important question is to arrive at a non-sectarian policy that appraises the mass political level accurately and recognises

the need to operate there where development of the differentiation within the class can be best assisted.)

Instead, the documents offer the alternative of a pseudo "coalition of the left" to include seven categories, only one of which, the C.P., is precisely a political formation.

This alternative leadership, isolated from and confronting the Labor Party, is envisaged as supplanting the Labor Party in respect of mass allegiance:

"Although joint or limited actions are as yet difficult to achieve, ... considerable possibilities exist in the trade unions^{by} for joint actions of a radical kind and for rank and file influence to be reflected back into the Labor Party.

"The possibility for change in the (Labor) Party cannot be ignored.

"An active political participation in the parties of the labor movement, especially where the union is affiliated to the Labor Party so that affiliation means participation in the development of the Party and its policies and not simply support for policies decided apart from the unions and their memberships.

"... a Labor Party developing^{by} this way could become a very important part of a future 'coalition of the left' for radical social change and socialism.

"Communists help to create the conditions in which non-revolutionaries may become activists for socialism as previously outlined--- briefly by joint actions where possible or by parallel movements, in the process contesting establishment and reformist ideas.

"The C.P. supports election of Labor Governments because it seeks the defeat of the conservative coalition and because in today's conditions this would represent a shift to the left."

(Note: The euphemism "activists for socialism" in the context above can only be translated as "revolutionaries". So the documents are saying that the Labor Party can be transformed to achieve revolution "for radical change and socialism". Further comment on the false assertion that "affiliation (of unions at present) means simply support for policies decided apart from the unions and their memberships", is superfluous in respect of documents that refuse to see the existing low political level as the reason for the predominance of false policies.

Without going this far, it is elementary Marxism that serious revolutionaries must be prepared to accompany the proletariat in its still-continuing Labor Party experience. This dictates entrism coincident with maintenance of an independent Marxist formation as the conscience of the organised entrists. Electoral results continue to prove that the Labor Party at its present political level has the allegiance of the Labor movement, as does the seeming capitulation of the Victorian Branch Labor Party State Executive to the Federal Executive of the Labor Party. Experience urges the conclusion that this situation will not be significantly altered by the challenge of outside formations in advance of the

future differentiation in the Labor Party, and even ^{then} the Labor Party left wing will find alternative leaders in its own ranks, identified with its struggle. "Exceptions" such as Balmain only prove the rule. There it was not outsiders who held the support of the majority in a Labor electorate, despite the capitulation of the official left.)

x x x

The objectives set out in the document include:

"At present abolition of the penal clauses and of the arbitration system as a whole would be of particular importance, as would realisation of demands involved in the struggle for 'student power' and 'workers' control'. All forces on the left should help to develop this into a national demand for social control."

"Complete abolition of the arbitration acts, penal clauses, Crimes Act and restrictive laws."

(Note: The first quotation above is placed within the context of changes that are possible and of great importance, "even though they may not themselves transform the system". While the demands are cautiously formulated and quite valid they are of sufficient import to bourgeois rule to be unachievable at least until the revolutionary development has reached the stage of dual power, unless the bourgeoisie decides to lean on other draconic laws mentioned in the second quotation.)

Two other judgments on demands require comment:

"Rejection of the biased concept of capacity to pay, which simply enshrines the existing class determined division of wealth".

"Pensioners, who would not be subject to any means test, initially to receive no less than half the minimum living wage."

(Note: It is correct to reject class-determined capacity to pay which includes also the idea of the inevitability of capitalist social relationships. But the approach is too simplistic a reaction since the concept of profitability raised by the A.C.T.U. as a wage-fixing criterion introduces the idea of the validity of the demand for opening the books of Big Business for workers' inspection, involving the perspective of inspection of all the debits and credits of capitalist society --- a forerunner of workers' control. Pension age people with an income equivalent to the living wage should hardly qualify for a pension also. Secondly, half the minimum living wage, especially in the case of a single pensioner, is not an adequate objective for a revolutionary programme.)

x x

In regard to foreign and military policy, so pertinent to an organisation's measuring-up to a Leninist position, we read:

Australian foreign policy "has led to support for the principle

of peaceful co-existence between countries irrespective of social systems" and the urgent need to "place military policy on a genuinely defensive basis."

Despite all the evidence that imperialism must of necessity promote counter-revolution and intervention to seek to contain and roll back the socialist sector in the world, i.e., the workers' states, the colonial revolution and the revolutionary thrustings of the proletariat of the metropolitan countries, the first proposition continues to sow illusions in pacifism. Equally to be condemned is propagation of the illusion that imperialist military policy can be transformed to a genuinely defensive basis. Against the armed forces of imperialism must be counterposed the armed forces of the proletarian revolution, the development of which latter will stem from the workers' defence guards which the unfolding of the class struggle will put on the order of the day. The C.P.A.' weekly paper, Tribune of September 16, 1970, gets close to the question when it quotes the 1915 Lenin:

"During a reactionary war, a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government..." and, "wartime revolutionary action against one's own government indubitably means, not only desiring its defeat, but really facilitating such defeat..."

Tribune said Lenin was referring to a different war to that of Australian imperialism against the Vietnamese revolution. It did not point out that the difference was that Czarist Russia was at war with a rival imperialism, which latter for the Russians was categorised as aggressor. The authors of the document will find no precedent in Lenin for any ambiguity as to the nature and role of the armed forces of capitalism nor deception about placing its policy on a defensive basis. The activities of the police army provided the Sydney anti-imperialist demonstrators on September 18, a valuable preliminary corrective to illusions concerning the armed forces of capitalism.

x x x

Finally, a revolutionary party can function only if the members share its basic principles. But such basic principles must be formulated with the C.P. this does not seem to be the case, but rather loyalty to the whole of its Congress decisions is required. So that, if this organisational principle is implemented at the C.P.'s present stage of evolution, critics basing themselves on revolutionary-Marxism would have no place in the party.

x x x

The above criticism is not to be taken as non-recognition of the degree of forward development of the C.P. in the last period. Rather it is a statement of the contention of the need for revision of many formulations in its programmatic documents in a thoroughly objective fashion if a revolutionary programme of inner consistency is to emerge.

The documents state: "In the process of striving to come to grips with the realities and needs of present conditions in the world and in Australia, it (the C.P.) will submit its past theories, policies and actions to the closest self-critical scrutiny." Its demonstration of bona fides involves implementation of this promise and shunning any tendency to portray a "a new situation" based upon an exaggerated interpretation of "a new stage" of capitalism as justifying accommodation with its past when other conditions prevailed. Confrontation and understanding of its past political line and its basis is unavoidable for the elaboration of a revolutionary-Marxist programme and policy.

19th September, 1970

```

@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@
@
@ PRAGUE LETTER @
@ -----o0o----- @
@ 1st. July, 1970 @
@
@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@

```

THE LAST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING JUST ENDED WITH THE EXPULSION OF DUBCEK. THUS THE "NORMALISATION" REQUIRED BY THE RUSSIANS AND EXECUTED BY OUR OWN STALINISTS, TAKES ITS COURSE. IT MORE AND MORE TAKES ON THE ASPECT OF A "SPITEFUL REVENGE".

The "normalisation" is above all synonymous with a purge of the Communist Party. Of 1,200,000 Party members at the beginning of 1970, nearly 500,000 have been expelled, suspended or have surrendered their cards. The purge has taken on new proportions since March 1970. News came from Kiev that the Russians were demanding 200, - 300,000 Party expulsions. This report, which appeared unsigned in Rude Pravo, seemed exaggerated, but it is now clear that our own Stalinists have even outstripped their mentors' wishes.

Before March 1970, the purge was carried out more slowly, less widely. Only leaders of the highest rank, famous intellectuals, were expelled from the Party following Dubcek's replacement by Husak in March 1969. At the end of 1969, the Party leadership decided to set up expulsion committees at all levels, to examine the attitude of Party members and branches during and after the Prague Spring. These "committees" had to be made up of volunteers. The leadership estimated that it would find plenty of traitors to make accusations. In fact, after discussion the "liberals" --- the great majority of the militants --- decided to participate "en masse" in these committees. The result was one which could not have been anticipated by Husak, Indra and Bilak: the committees concluded that the policy followed by communist militants and Party organisations was exactly that of the official leadership at that time. These committees were then disbanded; the leadership justified this step by saying that "the right wing revisionists had infiltra-

ted and monopolised the committees and were banding together in solidarity to keep themselves in the Party". For once the leadership was not wrong.

After failing in this attempt to turn militants against each other, the leadership then suspended Party organisations at the base, collectively. For example, the well-known CKD factory in Prague had 800 of its militants excluded. One Prague district committee had 350 of a membership of 600 (at the beginning of 1970) excluded or suspended. A suburban high school had 17 Communist teachers (out of a staff of 50) collectively suspended because they refused to denounce each other, and refused to give the names of militants who had moved resolutions voted on in 1968. Once suspended, the militant could be reinstated if he answered "correctly" the following questionnaire, presented to all Party members:

- "What is your opinion of the fraternal aid offered by our brothers in the Warsaw Pact in August 1968?"
- "What do you think of Dubcek, of Husak?"
- "What has been your attitude before and after August 21st 1968?"
- "What has been the attitude of other Party members who have been active with you?"

Who was to be affected by this purge? The whole of the intelligentsia first of all, as Husak himself declared

"that it would be wrong not to see that the opportunists and organisers of counter-revolution are recruited from among intellectuals."

The tragedy for these militants is that exclusion or suspension from the Party is often accompanied by their being laid off work. In a country where work is obligatory this is a way of sentencing some of these people to a term of "SOCIAL parasitism", if they cannot find work. And every effort is made to ensure that they do not. Hardly have they found a job (usually in a factory) when they are again sacked, simply on the strength of a phone call from a Party official. It should be noted --- and this is indicative of the nature of relations between the Stalinists and the masses --- that in most cases, these calls, as well as the slanderous, pimping newspaper articles, are anonymous.

Workers who have surrendered their Party cards are often found in factories. They don't fear the sack, as the factories are short of manpower and have very limited production. In fact, it is the managers (superintendents), either put firmly in their place in 1968 or else won over to the policies of that time, who are being excluded from the Party en masse and losing their jobs: more than 1,000 of them in the big factories of urban and suburban Prague alone. The present leaders consider that these managers are too closely linked with the workers in each enterprise. In fact, in spite of the present situation, the managers had maintained contact with the Workers' Councils set up in June-July 1968. Or with the most representative worker militants, in

those places where there had been insufficient time for a Council to be organised, and they continued to make decisions only after consultation with them.

The important question here, after the last Central Committee meeting, is whether or not there will be big trials and massive arrests. Husak denies that he is preparing "show trials" but on the other hand he says that the present leadership has been "too soft", that there is to be no mercy shown to counter-revolutionaries.

One thing certain is that some trials are officially forecast. The first are bound to be those of Pachman, Battek, Tesar, Kynch, Nepras, Kohout, Havel, Vaculik, Skutina and Wagner. Of these ten, only the first three are now in prison, and have been for 10 months, contrary to Czechoslovakian laws which provide for only 3 weeks imprisonment between arrest and the beginning of trial. This trial has been put back twice, the main accused, the chess-player Pachman, not being presentable to the court "because of serious health troubles". The second trial anticipated is that of General Prchlik and some of his collaborators. It was Prchlik who, after the Central Committee meeting of January, 1968, replaced Miroslav at the head of the departments in charge of police, army and militia supervision. He it was who revealed that the Novotnyist stalinists had mobilised an armoured division to intervene against the Dubcek team. Finally, the third trial anticipated is that of the "Trotskyist" students, among whom is Vladislav Mravec, former member of the Presidium of Students of Bohemia-Moravia who spent 3 months in prison at the beginning of this year, as well as Peter Uhl and Frolik, accused of being members of the Revolutionary Youth Movement and imprisoned since January.

What alarms us greatly is the reappearance in the courts of the judge's responsibility for the repression of the 'fifties and the application of an emergency regulation: in some cases, the judge is authorised to pass sentence without jury, assessors, or any appeal. A recent trial shows the way justice is conceived by Husak. Rude Pravo, central organ of the Party, having slandered Kriegel, the latter sued the paper for defamation. Rude Pravo declared in an anonymous article that Kriegel "had deserted during the Spanish war", "that he had been sent on a mission to Great Britain" (where he had never set foot) by an organisation not specified, "that he had no medical diplomas". The judge hardly listened to Kriegel's explanations and in the end sentenced himself with taking from his brief a paper on which his verdict had been written in advance, which Rude Pravo published: "Some errors had crept into the article in question, but the general line is correct. As to defamation, it was by being expelled from the Party that Kriegel was dishonoured." And Kriegel was ordered to pay the trial costs....

The police also have been extensively purged and the people formerly responsible for the purges of the '50s are reappearing. For example, Mamula, replaced by Prchlik at the head of No.8 Department of the Party in January 1968, had disappeared, certainly out of fear of having to answer for the assassinations he personally ordered and committed. He has now resumed his position and has just been co-opted to the Central Committee as General Secretary for North Moravia. Such are the men organising the "return" now.

In present conditions, two years after the Soviet occupation, the resistance is organising with difficulty, groups being formed to discuss the reasons for the present evolution and from this to derive a possible line of action. Active resistance is at the point of extinction and Dubcek could be expelled without even a symbolic action in his favour being undertaken. It is true that Dubcek is now not badly discredited for having in the first place accepted the first stages. Everyone has the feeling that it was possible to more effectively resist the invasion in August 1968 and then the occupation; Dubcek is paying for his hesitations.

What holds good for the moment on the level of the Broad masses is "passive resistance": absenteeism in the factories, poor zeal in work, total boycott of the official press which no one buys, a carping spirit in face of the authorities and the occupiers.

What most alarms the present leaders is the general decline in industrial production. They have even been brought to the stage of putting Soviet soldiers to work in the big factories to "give the socialist example" and to enable facile comparisons of productivity to be made. Furthermore, these Soviet "volunteers" are shamefully exploited: in addition to their ordinary service pay, they draw only 1 Kps per month whilst the Soviet Army draws the whole of their wages (including allowances). The workers in the factories stand aloof from them; in this case it does not appear at all that this solution adopted vis-a-vis the Soviet soldiers is the best, it is not from this that they can better understand the aspirations of the Czechoslovak workers. All the more since things are not going the best in this army: at the end of 1969 workers, in constructing the foundations of a new building, recovered the bodies of Soviet soldiers who had been shot; immediately, the press and radio spoke of acts of counter-revolutionaries, but for everybody here, it was a question of soldiers executed by the Soviet authorities themselves and placed there naturally so as to be discovered.

The workers do not work or work much, because they have the impression of not working for themselves. All the more so since entire factories work exclusively for the USSR at prices below cost.

In face of the repression that the "normalisation" increasingly means, solidarity is being organised spontaneously here, by groups forming to take up the struggle. This struggle sees itself on the lines of what was best in the Prague Spring, that is, a socialism based on workers' councils and self-management.

What the Czechoslovakian militants need is active political and material solidarity to know that their struggle is felt as being that of all true communists of the whole world.

=====

STATEMENT:

=====

FOR DEFENCE OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION.

=====

The Revolutionary-Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International expresses its complete active solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance fighting against the conspiracy of the united forces of imperialism and Arab reaction.

It exhorts the world revolutionary forces to actively, immediately and everywhere assist the Palestinian Resistance and its Marxist vanguard of all tendencies in its decisive struggle to repulse the assault of reaction, to consolidate its acquired positions and thus to better prepare the revolutionary solution of the conflict with Zionism, imperialism and Arab reaction.

11th June 1970

=====

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION.

We reproduce here a statement by Denis Freney which is most timely and in which INTERNATIONAL finds itself in general agreement. It is anticipated that a fuller statement on the Palestinian Revolution will be included in our next issue.

.....

THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION IS NOW PASSING THROUGH A DECISIVE CRISIS. IT IS NOW UNDER ATTACK NOT ONLY FROM ZIONIST COLONIALISM WHICH HAS SEIZED THE HOMELAND OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, BUT FROM "BROTHER" ARAB RULERS SUCH AS KING HUSSEIN AND THE SILENT COMPLICITY OF PRESIDENT NASSER UNDER PRESSURE HIMSELF FROM THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY AND THE EGYPTIAN BUREAUCRATIC BOURGEOISIE.

Hussein, the feudal puppet ruler of US imperialism, is attempting to crush the Palestinian Revolution represented by the different guerilla units. The Palestinian refugees make up over 50% of the Jordanian population.

Nasser stands by and allows the bloody slaughter of the Palestinian guerillas by Hussein. So too does the Soviet, restricting itself to warnings to the US not to intervene.

Only the left wing Syrian Bassist regime, despite all its shortcomings, to its eternal credit gives aid to the guerillas.

US imperialism stands ready to intervene with the Sixth Fleet poised off the coast. Melvin Laird, Nixon's spokesman, openly admits that marines will go into Jordan if Hussein is threatened.

In Australia, Zionism has an almost total monopoly of public information, including on the left.

It is about time that the truth about Palestine was told.

It was not the Arabs who drove the Jews into exile.

Jews and Arabs lived in tolerance in the Middle East for centuries. In Christian Europe Jews were mercilessly persecuted in pogroms. This culminated in Hitler's "final solution".

To rid itself of the "Jewish problem" the victorious "democracies" of World War Two allowed reactionary Jewish nationalism --- Zionism --- to seize the land of the Palestinian Arabs and establish the State of Israel.

Imperialism gained thus a very important ally in its struggle against the emergent struggle of the Arabs against feudalism and colonialism.

In 1956, the Zionists participated in the occupation of the Suez Canal, after Nasser had nationalised it. They were conscious servants of imperialism.

In 1967, they inflicted a further terrible blow on the Palestinian people when they seized the remainder of Palestine and paralysed the Suez Canal, thus crippling Nasser's regime and making it dependent on Soviet aid.

In all that has occurred, it has been the poverty-stricken Arab peasants and workers of Palestine who have suffered. They have in their millions been eking out an existence in refugee camps.

In a "second exodus", tens of thousands of Palestinians have been forced to migrate to other Arab lands (particularly in the oil-rich sheikdoms) and to Europe to earn enough to live on.

Out of the misery of their exile, and out of the defeat of June 1967, has emerged a new and proud revolutionary movement among the Palestinian people --- the different Palestinian guerilla movements.

The most clear sighted of these movements --- the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) --- understood from the

beginning that if they were to regain their homeland, it was necessary to have a socialist revolution throughout the whole of the Middle East, which would not only overthrow the reactionary Zionist regime in Israel and allow the Jewish minority to form an autonomous national entity within a general Middle East Socialist Federation, but that reactionary and pro-imperialist regimes such as Hussein's would also have to be overthrown.

When the guerillas began to form through their control of the Palestinian refugees an alternative power structure within Jordan and began to demand certain rights for the Palestinians, Hussein and his generals, dependent on the backward Bedouin tribes, sought to crush the guerillas.

Now they are seeking to crush them no matter the cost and no matter the crime they commit before humanity.

Radicals in Australia may criticise this or that action of a particular guerilla group. But let us maintain our perspective. The Palestinian Revolution, the hope of the survival of a whole people, is now being crushed. NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTIVE, UNCONDITIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION.

We are much more involved in Vietnam and Indochina, given our presence there. But Palestine is the Vietnam of the Arab world, and common human solidarity demands that WE DO SOMETHING to awaken first of all the radical anti-war movement to what is the import of the struggle in Jordan, which is a crucial centre of the world revolution at the present time.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION UNDER ATTACK FROM IMPERIALISM, ARAB REACTION AND ZIONIST COLONIALISM!

FOR A MIDDLE EAST SOCIALIST FEDERATION, WITH EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL INHABITANTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST!

(Issued as a leaflet on 18th September 1970)

ON SALE NOW:

THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION by Michel Pablo..... 10 cents.....
 REVOLUTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA by Denis Freney.. 20 cents.....
 WORLD IN REVOLUTION by Michel Pablo..... 10 cents.....
 THE IDEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF THE "UNIFIED SECRETARIAT".. 10 cents.....
 SUBSCRIBE TO "INTERNATIONAL" --- a revolutionary socialist magazine for workers' power, self-management and international socialism.....\$1.50 per 12 issues.....

PLACE YOUR ORDERS NOW::: Please make cheques, money orders, postal notes, etc., payable to A.McLean.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, DONATIONS, ORDERS TO: A.McLean, P.O. Box 13, Balmain, N.S.W., 2041.

THE SECOND MORATORIUM DEMONSTRATION

18th September, 1970.

In Sydney over two thousand cops were mobilised. Fifteen thousand of us made our way by radial marches, or separately, to the main rally. Marching from Sydney University four thousand were confined to the shadows of the footpath on one side of the street. We were continually harassed by lines of police two and three deep in places. Scores were arrested, and police, exercising the 'free hand' given them by the Government, punched and kicked many of the arrested, before throwing them into the wagons. The march was chopped up into fragments and directed where the police wanted it to go. The scene for students and staff coming from the University of N.S.W. was the same, except they were stopped from joining the main rally. Certainly in the march out from the main rally, later in the day, people burst onto the roadway and occupied it in defiance of the pigs. But too many refused to join them and police drove us back to the footpath, methodically smashing and dispersing the demonstration. As darkness came the pig thuggery got worse. There were a couple of tentative attempts by demonstrators to link arms and rescue arrested comrades; but they remained tentative. In Sydney pro-Vietcong elements, with their flags and leaflets, were stronger than in the May Moratorium demonstration, though still a really minor current compared to the liberal pacifism, which has been allowed such currency (and even encouraged) by so-called revolutionary factions for so long and which should have been countered with internationalist solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution right from the beginning.

A definite gain of the May Moratorium demonstration was the taking of the streets and converting, for a considerable period, a main city intersection into a large forum against the imperialist intervention in Indo-China. All this on a normal Friday. This was what happened in May in Sydney and in many, though not all, other centres. As INTERNATIONAL 13 (June 1970) put it: "The positive achievement of the Moratorium was to establish the right to demonstrate, up to date branded by the Establishment and treated as criminal activity."

In September this gain was wiped out in Sydney and elsewhere - with the exception of Melbourne where it was severely restricted.

Everywhere the forces of the State - and they were only partially mobilised - restricted and smashed the manifestation against the war in Vietnam. Everywhere the movement was forced to retreat. In Brisbane they did as they were told. In Adelaide over 100 were arrested and mounted police were used to break up an attempt to take an intersection for half an hour. In Melbourne the 50,000 demonstrators (many more than elsewhere) completed half their

march through the streets but, after only a very short rally in the streets, were barred by police from completing their march and so they dispersed.

The pressure on the movement by the bourgeoisie and the State was meant to reveal the movement's weakness to itself and so demoralise it. By surrounding the movement with an aura of "violence" and "lawlessness" the bourgeoisie and the State hoped to frighten off marginal supporters and circumscribe the movement's appeal to the as-yet "parliamentarist" workers.

Before "the operation" was carried out on September 18th the right wing of the Australian Labor Party collaborated by denouncing the demonstration and warning people not to attend. Along with an orchestrated mass media campaign, this was meant to "scare" people off from attending.

In the event the numbers at the September Moratorium demonstration against the Vietnam War were down on those at the May demonstrations.

The numbers attending the September demonstration, the composition of these demonstrators, and the behaviour of the Moratorium leaders before and after the 18th, confirms the analysis of the Moratorium movement made by comrade N. in INTERNATIONAL 15 (August 1970).

In an article entitled "Tactics and Revolutionary Strategy", Cde. N. argued that those who envisaged the Moratorium movement as, or very soon to be, an independent-extra-parliamentary-mass-movement against the war were deluding themselves and ignoring the solid presence and realities of the existing working class movement, the ranks of which remain at present "parliamentarist" in outlook and put their faith in the forthcoming A.L.P. Federal Government as the solution to their discontents. As he wrote then of those comrades envisaging such an independent-extra-parliamentary-mass-movement:

"And so they propose to build a movement. As we see, it will have to supplant the real movement (the organized working class movement just-as-it-is __ed) and force a change of policy on the bourgeoisie. And where will they get the 'bodies' for this mass movement? By transforming the historically-fashioned backward elements of the real movement into the elements of an extra-parliamentary mass action movement, without this rank and file having gone through the experience of disillusionment with parliamentarism.

Such is the stuff of dreams. "

(INTERNATIONAL 15, p. 2)

Such dreams were shared by all manner of revolutionary socialists: by the Arons faction, the neo-stalinists and by both Germainist factions and others. For this chimera these 'revolutionary socialists' in the leadership of the Moratorium hid and camouflaged their internationalism. That was to be kept safely in the background lest it scare off supporters.

Such dreams persisted up until the second Moratorium demonstrations, with some comrades predicting widespread political strikes which did not eventuate. In the event the number of workers among the demonstrators in September was down, in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the demonstrators, compared to last May. This is not to say that a large section of the working class do not

oppose the war, only that they will not respond at present to calls from small minorities for extra-parliamentary action.

The situation amongst students was different. In most cities, in May and September, the demonstrations were impressive vanguard manifestations dominated by students, and this was the case more in September than in May. Overall in Sydney, for instance, the number as well as the percentage, of students amongst the demonstrators probably rose between the May and September demonstrations - numbers involved at Sydney University were slightly down but up on the other two Sydney campuses, and there were more high school students involved.

Certainly in Melbourne in both May and September the demonstrations attracted mass support; in May 100,000 marched, in September 50,000. This was due to the leading role played in the movement in that city by the leaders of the left-wing Victorian branch of the A.L.P. who, however, attempt to confine the movement to constitutional and parliamentarist limits.

Experience has shown that for the movement to take on mass proportions it had to cease to be independent and drop its extra-parliamentary ambitions.

The leaders of the Moratorium recognised this - in their practice at least. Take the behaviour of the New South Wales secretariat on the question of applying for a police permit. In May the secretariat had informed the police of the plans to take the Sydney streets and the Town Hall intersection, consulted the Police Commissioner, and then gone merrily ahead. In September they attempted the same approach but the Police Commissioner refused to play ball and threatened to smash the demonstration if the secretariat did not apply for a police permit to march and submit to police supervision. The leader of the Parliamentary wing of the A.L.P. in N.S.W., Pat Hills, threatened to dissociate himself from the march unless the secretariat applied for a permit. Accordingly the secretariat applied for a permit. That it was "granted" in a very restrictive form, and that Mister Hills denounced the march anyhow, is now history. But the point is that the N.S.W. secretariat recognised that if the demonstration was to be more than a hard-core vanguard manifestation, if it was to get a measure of mass support, then A.L.P. neutrality (at the very least) and "constitutional" behaviour were necessary.

Even in the universities the mass support for the Moratorium has depended on liberal and reformist leadership, on pacifism, and emphasis on 'the non-violence' and legality of the movement.

So much for the independent-extra-parliamentary-mass-movement to which explicit internationalism was sacrificed

But why did the bourgeoisie and its State act against this movement? "Official" explanations about ensuring the flow of traffic need not detain us. While local political factors in Sydney and Melbourne were important, they do not supply us with an explanation of this nation-wide operation.

It was that element in the Moratorium movement of what the French call "contestation" which concerned the bourgeoisie and the State. It is the idea of demands backed by rising mass action to get their implementation, which was

partially concretised and realised in the May street demonstrations and central city occupations, which worried the bourgeoisie and their representatives. This element in the Moratorium movement is part of a wider incipient extra-parliamentary movement, and it troubles the Establishment. The Budget ^{strike} also partly expressed this tendency so dangerous to the bourgeois order. So limited an example of workers' organisations resorting to a short political strike, but with its implications of workers making certain demands and using their industrial strength to enforce their demands, sent the representatives and ideologists of the bourgeoisie into astonishing hysteria.

The police operation was aimed at the suppression of the "disturbing" element in the movement. The bourgeoisie depend on inertia and obedience to their rules. An element in the movement threatened their game.

Further explanation for the operation is found in the imperialist strategy in Indo-China. If they are committed to a "Korean strategy" there, to the long bombardment of liberated society in to the grave and into exhaustion-which appears to be their aim- then driving the movement for disengagement off the streets and attempting to weaken it in the imperialist countries is a natural enough commitment.

What should be our response to the situation to the situation outlined above?

With as much unity in action as is possible, revolutionary socialists must continue to develop the internationalist and solidarity current in the Moratorium movement, rallying support for the Provisional Revolutionary Government in southern Vietnam and explaining the nature of imperialism. As well the movement for student control needs more devotion and attention. Further the task of developing a "workers' power" current in the working class must be persisted with, combining propaganda for self-management socialism with agitation for workers' control, for which there are increasing opportunities.

While this activity must be pursued by revolutionary socialists organised independently, this independent sector must, in a planned and deliberate way, implant militants in the A.L.P. branches. The intention of these militants must be to involve these branches and their constituency in the campaigns mentioned above. Further revolutionary socialist A.L.P. "branches", "on the streets" and in touch with their working class constituency should challenge the right wing in the A.L.P. and counter its propositions for solving the discontents of the working class and other strata with "transitional" alternatives, with socialist proposals

Such an orientation, which we have been elaborating in INTERNATIONAL, will best prepare us for the future. As it was put in INTERNATIONAL 13:

"The approaching electoral victory of the Labor Party represents the next forward stage in Australia's political development. This is not viewed with equanimity by the capitalist class for the reason that the party has the working class as its mass base.

The class must go through the experience of a government formed by its traditional party. After a certain period of the latter's governmental performance, growing rank and file exasperation with its incapacity to provide real

solutions to the problems of society will be revealed, with the beginning of the differentiation in the party in advance of which no significant revolutionary socialist formation will emerge."

"Consequently revolutionary Marxists give critical support to the Labor Party in its pursuit of electoral victory over the Liberal-Country Party coalition government. Further, revolutionary cadres need to be integrated in the movement, not as conformists, but to constantly enunciate the transitional programme alternative, and to be in the position to effect the natural juncture with the mass left wing for the clash inevitably proceeding from the differentiation referred to. It cannot be over-emphasised that there will be no significant renunciation of the Labor Party during the whole preparatory period referred to above."

H.G.

October 1970

- 1) The Australian Moratorium is a united front organisation which organises large demonstrations around the slogans of immediate withdrawal of Australian and imperialist military aid to the Saigon regime and of an immediate end to conscription (which operates in a limited form in Australia.)

THE BIRTH OF AN ARAB SOVIET

As the contending forces in Amman were rushing headlong toward undisguised civil war, a little-noticed event took place farther north in Irbid, the second-largest city in Jordan. There, Al Fatah commandos proclaimed a "liberated" area and set about creating the first revolutionary city-state in the Middle East. On hand to witness the birth of this Palestinian sport was NEWSWEEK's Loren Jenkins. His report:

Power to the people has long been one of the principal tenets of the Palestinian liberation movement's Marxist fringe. But most outside observers have dismissed such revolutionary sloganeering as the bossifful prattle of coffeehouse intellectuals. After what happened in Irbid last week, no one can afford to sneer. The actual take-over of the ramshackle trading community of 150,000 people occurred two weeks ago while Jordanian authorities were busily trying to free the hundreds of hijacked passengers held at nearby Dawson Field. After Bedouin supporters of King Hussein massacred 23 guerrillas in an ambush near Irbid, local fedayeen—most of them members of Al Fatah and an extremist commando group called the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDF)—brought the bodies of their dead comrades into the city and displayed them in front of the main mosque. "They were completely mutilated," one Irbid shopkeeper told me. "Some had their hands tied with their intestines, others had their eyes gouged out or had been dismembered."

Siege: The reaction of the populace was what the commandos had expected—instant outrage. "Those who had never believed us about the barbarity of the army were suddenly awakened to action," said one guerrilla. In a seemingly spontaneous explosion of anger, the Irbidians swarmed out of the mosque and laid siege to government buildings. But after the initial flare-up there was little bloodshed. Early last week, a hastily summoned "people's court" condemned nine Jordanian Army officers to death, but since all government troops had already retreated from the city, the sentences were meaningless. The governor of Irbid and several score of his supporters who had sought refuge in



'Liberated area': Palestinian commandos prepare to defend Irbid

the central military casern were provided with food and water by the commandos and told that they would be allowed to leave if they surrendered their weapons to the insurgents and renounced their allegiance to King Hussein.

By midweek, when I arrived in Irbid, the city seemed surprisingly calm. Shops were doing a brisk business and people were milling around the fly-infested souk (market) or sipping thick Turkish coffee in side-street cafes. The only outward signs of change were the heavily armed commando patrols which ambled about the city, often with a sheepish-looking policeman in tow to prove that the guerrillas were willing to make their peace with cooperative government authorities. "Many of the government people have been willing to work for us for the good of the revolution," a young chemical engineer who claimed to be the city's chief commissar (old me. "See for yourself how normal the situation is. We are now ruling here and things are working better than before."

But despite the surface tranquility of life in Irbid, genuine revolutionary activity was going on behind the scenes. To replace the city administration, the commandos set up on every street "people's committees," which in turn elected members to larger district committees. These groups, composed of commando commissars as well as leading residents of Irbid who support the Palestinian cause, held evening meetings to discuss such matters as the future organization of the city and preparations for its defense. Although they are similar in structure to the local soviets that the Bolsheviks formed—in the early days of the Russian Revolution, the committees seemed to be a rela-

tively spontaneous response to local events with no overt influence from Moscow or Peking. "We have not had enough time yet to crystallize our thoughts," a Syrian doctor who is a member of one committee told me. "Everything is moving so fast that we just try to cope with things as they come up." Clearly, however, the Marxist leaders of the Popular Democratic Front were more certain about where they were headed. "This week you are seeing the birth of the first Arab liberated area," commented a commando chief. "You could call it—and I prefer to call it—the first Arab soviet."

Right before I left Irbid, a "people's congress" met in the center of the city and resolved to bar all pro-government officials from the city and to resist any attack by the Jordanian Army. Toward that end, some 1,200 commandos hastily dug trenches along the main routes of attack and set up road blocks to control movement to and from the city. "We are preparing to fight here until the end," said Lt. Abu Kussai, a burly 30-year-old Palestinian college graduate who is in charge of the city's defenses. "We are a poor nation in a very big struggle, but we are confident of victory."

By the end of the week, however, that confidence seemed somewhat premature. There were reports of skirmishes between the commandos and units of the Jordanian Army in the vicinity of Irbid. And it seemed only a matter of time before the army would launch a major assault on the Marxist stronghold. "If Hussein is going to rule his country, he will have to retake Irbid," commented a Western diplomat based in Amman. "No government can allow such a situation to exist and still pretend to be a government."

The decisive battle could not have been won on the basis of the pre-1970 party constitution which made it legitimate for anyone who supported "socialism" (undefined) to hold a card and work inside the party for aims quite incompatible with the workers' interests or rights. ("Socialism" could mean anything which anyone, at any time, has given the label — the welfare state, the kibbuzin, nazism, the Soviet travesty.) Nor can the struggle be won on the basis of the present constitution, which spells out the definition of "socialism" in such fine detail as to be unworkable as a criterion for party membership.

A Sydney branch proposed to the 1970 Congress that cards be issued only to those who were prepared to declare commitment to social ownership of the national wealth, and workers' self-management and political democracy untrammelled by any exclusive social grouping. The effect would have been to rule off the agenda of inner-party debate any overt attacks on these things, and attempts to defend any nonopolisation of human rights by any exclusive social grouping anywhere at any time. It would have provided a political basis for the expulsion of the Stalinists and the development of a common strategy for Australian socialist revolution.

The 1970 Congress (and the present C.P.A. leadership) rejected this as it rejected other demands which posed a threat to "conservationism" — the consensus which includes the Fraternal Brothers. The C.P.A. is paying the price, and may yet have to hold a special congress to expel the Stalinist wing and adopt aims which open the way to a party based on the best political currents of the Australian left movement, a party unmistakably committed to the conquest of political and economic power, and full political and other human rights, by the working class and its allies.

- (1) For example, there is strong liberal sentiment in the C.P.A. which is appalled by the monolithism of the past and rejects all 'harsh' measures against anybody. A purely organisational struggle repels 'liberals' without impelling them to consider the political necessities underlying the struggle.

!!!! !! !! !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! !!!!!!!!!!!!!

SUBSCRIBE** *****SUBSCRIBE*****SUBSCRIBE*** *
 \$1.50 for one year's subscription+++++12 issues+++++
 INTERNATIONAL FOR WORKERS POWER+SELFMANAGEMENT+SOCIALISM++
 ORDERS TO A.McLEAN
 P.O.Box 13
 BALMAIN 2041 N.S.W.
 Australia.

*** *****