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**SOME REMARKS
CONCERNING THE LEFT
IN ISRAEL**

Tel - Aviv , January 1967

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[The following document, written last January, was submitted for discussion among the members of the Israeli Socialist Organization. As outlined in a statement published in World Outlook, June 2 (p. 557), this grouping stands in opposition to the Israeli government. It advocates taking the road to socialism and forging Israeli-Arab unity in the framework of a socialist federation in the Middle East.]

[We are publishing the full text of «Some Remarks Concerning the Left in Israel» due to its interest in the light of the current crisis in the Middle East.]

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The left-wing parties existing today in Israel were all founded before the state of Israel came into existence; no new left party was formed after 1948 (apart from splits which had a brief existence before joining another party). Therefore, in order to understand these parties one must analyze their history prior to 1948.

This history is (exempting one notable case: the CP [Communist party]) the history of the Zionist left; i.e., the history of a nationalist left.

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In order to give the reader an idea of the unusual character of Zionism and its left wing consider the following fact:

All Zionist parties, from the rightist «HERUT» [«Freedom»] to the leftist «MAPAM» [«United Workers party»], whatever their enmity on the Israeli political arena, are members of «The Jewish Agency.» This agency is the organizational backbone of Zionism. One of its various activities is fund-raising among Jewish communities all over the world. (Although we do not possess exact figures it is not exaggerated to say that it raises sums of the order of £40 million [U.S. \$112 million] annually.)

This money finances all Zionist activities; a considerable part goes to subsidise the Israeli economy (mostly the agricultural sector, the Kibbutsim, etc.), another part to finance the Zionist parties, all of them — from Herut to Mapam.

These parties receive according to their size and bargaining power between £0.3 million [U.S. \$84,000] and £0.8 million [U.S. \$240,000] annually, each.

Thus, a Zionist party can finance a large daily paper, pay wages to many party officials, and keep a whole political organization running although the rank and file hardly pay membership fees or their newspaper subscriptions.

This peculiar circumstance enables political parties to exist long after the social forces that brought them into existence ceased to exist.

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The Zionist left originated in Czarist Russia (mostly Poland) in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth.

The Russian Jews participated actively in all anti-Czarist parties. In the SR [Social Revolutionary], Menshevik, Bolshevik, and others. Martov and Dan, Radek and Zinoviev, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, are only a few of the revolutionaries of Jewish origin who participated in the revolutions of 1905, February 1917 and October 1917. (These revolutionaries were, of course, anti-Zionists.)

The percentage of Jews among the revolutionaries was always greater than their percentage in the population. This was the result of a few factors : (1) Jews tended to concentrate in the urban areas. (2) A large Jewish proletariat existed in Poland (mostly in the textile industry). (3) There was a large Jewish intelligentsia in Russia. (4) The Jews were oppressed by the Czarist regime not only as proletarians, but also as a national minority.

The persecution of the Jews gave rise to social and economic interests, which eventually gave birth to a number of political parties.

A whole spectrum of left-wing parties came into existence, all seeking to alleviate the plight of the Jews as proletarians as well as members of a (national) minority group.

The main difference between these parties was between Zionists (a minority) and non-Zionists.

The largest party was the BUND [«Fraternity»]. This was basically a Social Democratic party of the Second International, which, under the conditions of Czarist Russia, was driven to the revolutionary side. The Bund never aimed at political power, only at improving the lot of the Jewish proletariat.

Lenin waged a long ideological struggle against the Bund, insisting that the proletariat must be organized on a territorial basis (i.e., all proletarians living and working in the same region or country, irrespective

of their nationality) whereas the Bund claimed that existing circumstances of national persecution forced the Jewish proletariat to defend their daily rights as a national minority especially as considerable parts of the Polish proletariat participated in anti-Jewish riots.

The Bund, however, never accepted the Zionist principle that only in an independent national Jewish state can the Jewish proletariat become free. The Bund was nationalist but not Zionist.

When Hitler exterminated East European Jewry, the Bund was exterminated, too. Remnants still exist in the USA, Latin America and Canada as a result of mass immigration of Jewish proletarians in the first decades of this century.

The ideologist of the Zionist left, who contested the ideas of the Bund as well as those of Lenin was Ber Borochow. He formulated the idea of the «Inverted Pyramid» meaning, briefly, the following : every nation consists of a pyramid of social layers; a broad basis of peasants, a layer of proletarians, then a layer of transport and services, civil servants; on top of this — the self-employed, artisans, doctors, lawyers, intellectuals, scientists. In the Jewish case this pyramid was deformed ; many lawyers, doctors, intellectuals, and other middle-class occupations, with few, if any peasants, and little proletarians. Therefore he claimed that the social structure of the Jewish people must first be rectified before it could undergo a transformation to socialism. This meant that the Jews must first establish a national state and therein become peasants and proletarians and only after accomplishing this step could they proceed to the step of revolution. (Theory of Steps.)

Following this theory in daily practice, the Zionist left preached and practiced emigration. After a period of training and indoctrination they sent their recruits to Palestine, mostly to the agricultural settlements. Ben-Gurion, Eshkol, Lavon, and many other prominent Zionist socialists who later became leaders in Israel came from these parties.

Some of these parties continue these practices even today in the U.S. and Latin America. We refer to HABONIM [«the Builders» affiliated to MAPAI], and HASHOMER HATZAIR [«the Young Guardian» affiliated to MAPAM].

These parties had sharp political conflicts with all those parties which aimed at a transformation of their own societies; ideologically they upheld the principle that no transformation of society can ever overcome anti-Semitism. They considered the persecution of national minorities to be a permanent feature of mankind (a view which the revolutionaries

strongly opposed). Politically they diverted many people from participating in revolutionary politics by their «emigrate to Palestine» policy. When the founder of political Zionism, T. Herzl, met the Czarist foreign minister Plehve (a notorious anti-Semite), he mentioned explicitly the last point in order to persuade him to grant permission for mass emigration of Jews from Russia.

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The primary division in Israeli politics is between the Zionists and non or anti-Zionists.

The division into right and left is of secondary importance (both subjectively and objectively).

The division inside the Zionist left is a family affair. Once, there was a considerable gap between the Social Democrats (Mapai) and those who considered themselves revolutionaries (Mapam), but in the last decade it narrowed so much, and the whole political spectrum of the left shifted so much to the right that ideological and political feuds gave way to a squabble for economic benefits.

MAPAI [«the Palestine Workers party»] has, for the last three decades, been the central party in Israeli politics (for reasons we shall explain later). Originally it was a Social Democratic party preaching gradual and peaceful transition to socialism. About a decade ago it dropped this aim, in order not to antagonize the USA, on whose direct and indirect support Israel depends for its existence.

In Israel there exist three major power structures: the Histadrut, the Jewish Agency, the official government. Mapai was always the largest in the first two, hence — also in the third.

Its main asset is the fact that it is in power, thereby possessing all benefits resulting from power, which in the special case of Israel are all-embracing. Its voters are, mostly, people who might lose their jobs, salaries, possibly houses and health insurance, by voting otherwise.

Mapam is the second largest party of the Zionist left. It was formed in the forties as a bloc of bodies, the most important of which was Hashomer Hatzair.

Mapam is torn between nationalist Zionist practices (e.g., expatriating fellahin [Arab peasants], as in the case of the village Bir'im in 1952) and internationalist slogans. This is reflected in the slogan in the heading of Mapam's daily paper *Al-Hamishmar* [«The Guardian»] which

reads: «To Zionism, Socialism, and friendship between nations.» The order is significant. Whenever Mapam was forced to choose between Zionism to Socialism, or between Zionism to Internationalism (and this happens quite often in Palestine), it chose Zionism, justifying this by the «uniqueness of the Jewish case.»

One has to remember that the internationalism of a party like Mapam has to be tested not by its policies towards the U.S. but first of all by its policies and practices towards the Palestinian Arabs.

In words Mapam supports socialism, the USSR, Cuba, the people of Vietnam. Once in a while it organizes a demonstration; but the nearer the issues come to Palestine — the more nationalistic it becomes.

Thus, Mapam supported the Suez campaign to the full, its ministers stayed in Ben-Gurion's Suez cabinet and justified (they still do!) the Israeli aggression. Later, when Ben-Gurion was forced to withdraw from Sinai and the Gaza strip, Mapam organized mass demonstrations against the withdrawal, insisting on the annexation of the Gaza strip to Israel.

Mapam refuses to recognize the right to self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs, or the right of the Palestinian refugees to repatriation; recently it went so far as to oppose a UN proposal to hold a referendum among the refugees to find out whether they prefer restitution payment to repatriation.

In Israeli politics Mapam does not play an independent role; it follows the lead of Mapai (sometimes reluctantly, but always submitting in the end). However, it does play a significant role in presenting Zionism to socialists and left-wing intellectuals in both the East and the West. Thus Mapam publishes a special periodical in English (*New Outlook*) for the West; also, Israeli ambassadors to Eastern countries like Poland or Yugoslavia are often Mapam leaders, whereas for negotiations with right winger and to Afro-Asian conferences — (often) a dark-skinned Jew.

Mapam's name is often connected with Kibbutsim, although most other parties (including the extreme rightist Herut and the religious parties) run a few Kibbutsim of their own.

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A Kibbutz is a communal agricultural settlement. Its members join it voluntarily and are free to leave at any time. The members do not own anything privately except a few clothes. The land belongs to the Zionist organization, the means of production, too — but they are donated com-

munally, decisions on policy, development, investment, election of chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc., are made by the general meeting of all members.

These elements of «Free Socialism» fascinated many intellectuals and socialists in the West, and are much advertised by Mapam all over the world.

A closer scrutiny reveals some flaws:

(1) The Kibbutz is usually a one-party affair, people voting Communist were expelled from Kibbutsim of Hashomer Hatsair and those voting Mapam — from Kibbutsim run by Mapai, etc. There is little political tolerance in the Kibbutz.

(2) The Kibbutz is part of a whole ideological setup. Namely: «From the Commune — to Communism»; or — let us fill the country with Kibbutsim [Communes] and eventually the majority of the population and economy will be of the Kibbutz type; i.e., a peaceful transition to Communism. Reality proved this to be a fallacy. All Kibbutsim are in debt to the government, private banks and firms. Without constant subsidies from Zionist institutions they would have been unable to exist. Fuel, cash, fertilizers, water, electricity, and machinery, have to be bought from sources external to the Kibbutz, and the products must compete in the market with goods produced by others, sometimes — by Arab fellahin. The Kibbutz (whose creation was largely motivated by the Borochov ideology) proved to be uncompetitive and was kept alive by Zionist subsidies.

(3) Faced with this reality, the Kibbutz turned to industrial activity. At first processing its agricultural products but gradually moving into other fields such as plastics, crockery, furniture and a host of other light industry products. However, the small population of a Kibbutz (a few hundred) could not provide the labour force for both agriculture and industry. Since giving up the agricultural activity would be tantamount to betrayal of the principles of Zionist socialism, the Kibbutz was forced to employ hired labour from nearby towns. Thus the communal Kibbutz society became a communal exploiter of hired labour. Usually the Kibbutz members act as overseers in their factories while the hired men do the less professional jobs. When work is over, the hired men go back to town. For them the Kibbutz is an employer like any other capitalists, except that capitalists don't preach socialism.

When a strike occurs in a Kibbutz factory, the owners call in the police without scruples.

The slogan «From the Commune — to Communism» proved doubly false. It did not bring about a transformation of Israeli society to socialism, let alone Communism. Instead, the Communes themselves were transformed from phalansteries into collective exploiters, profiting from hired labour. The history of the Kibbutz (indeed the history of the whole Zionist left) is the history of a Social Democracy corrupted by nationalism and the harsh economic realities of capitalist economy.

A point often overlooked is the significance of the Kibbutz for Zionist colonisation. A spirit of pioneering, collective, organized labour, a social structure specially suited to absorb newcomers, to defend itself, to carry out, through great personal sacrifices, unprofitable economic tasks in order to establish Zionist presence in a hostile area — these are the reasons why Zionist institutions financed the Kibbutsim, whether they belong to Mapai, Mapam, Herut, or the religious parties.

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The reader might get the impression that most activities of the Zionist left centered on the Kibbutz. This is by no means the case. Though the Kibbutsim played a significant Zionist role, their membership in Palestine (and later in Israel) never exceeded 5% of the Jewish population. The Zionist left created another establishment whose importance, power, and wealth exceeded by far those of all the Kibbutsim put together. This is the HISTADRUT [«Organization,» or in full, «The General Organization of Jewish Workers in Palestine»].

The giant was founded in 1922 by the Zionist left as an instrument for creating the Jewish proletariat. Today it owns a giant industry, banks, shipping, airline companies, the largest construction firm in Israel, a major share in nearly any economic branch in Israel, the largest health insurance system (there is no national health insurance in Israel). One out of three in the population pay membership fees to the Histadrut. Those who do not — lose their health insurance. Ninety percent of the Jewish workers are members of the trade unions run by Histadrut.

Although the Histadrut calls itself in English, «The General Federation of Labour in Israel,» thus aiming to create the familiar image of a federation of trade unions, it is unique in its aims and structure. Its Zionist characteristics outweigh by far its trade unionist ones, its present character having been shaped when it was established four decades ago.

In the early decades of this century, when the first Zionist socialists

came to Palestine, they discovered that most of the earlier Jewish settlers (noticeably in the colonies established by Baron Edmund de Rothschild (noticeably in the colonies established by Baron Edmund de Rothschild before the founding of the Zionist organization) employed Arab labour. How was it possible to transform the Jews into peasants and workers when Jewish landowners and capitalists preferred to employ Arab labour? they asked. As an answer they launched the Kibbutzim movement and (somewhat later) the Histadrut. Moreover, they started a nationalist campaign against all Jews employing Arab labour: «As Zionists you ought to create a Jewish working class in Palestine, and not to employ Arabs», they cried. All through the twenties and thirties their main slogan was, «Jewish labour only,» and they terrorized both Jewish employer and Arab worker.

The main instrument in this campaign was the Histadrut. It was not established for organizing the Jewish working class but for creating it. Arab workers were not accepted as members as a matter of principle; the Histadrut was «for Jews only,» as its name (in Hebrew) clearly said. It did not aim to defend the class interests of the Jewish workers either but called on them to make sacrifices, work harder, earn less, for the sake of establishing and (nowadays) strengthening the Jewish state. When the capitalists complained that Jewish labour was more expensive than Arab, the Histadrut often paid the difference out of its own funds and with other Zionist institutions launched the «Buy Jewish Only» campaign, implemented a boycott on Arab products, etc.

To this very day, the membership card of every Histadrut member reminds him of his duties, not the least important: to teach the new immigrants Hebrew — hardly a task for a common trade union, but a typical task for a nationalist organization.

When some socialist Zionists feebly objected to this negative policy towards the Arab workers, they were reminded that the Arab workers were unorganized and that it was the duty of a trade union to fight against employment of unorganized labour. Curious as it may seem — this argument was effective.

The Histadrut is probably the only trade union which has a «Department for Trade Unions.» This is so because its activities as owner and employer outweigh its activities as trade union. Actually the Histadrut owns the health insurance. In many unions the Histadrut officials appoint the secretaries of the unions. Where these are elected, they must first be approved by the officials before they may be recognized by the employers as representatives.

As an extra precaution, all membership fees (amounting to about 7% of the income of a member) are collected directly by the central organization; the local unions receiving their allotments from the central authorities. Thus, the central authorities maintain a firm control over the entire Israeli working class. When an «unauthorized» strike occurs, the strikers find themselves without a strike fund, facing the possibility of losing their job for good (if the employer happens to be the Histadrut itself) and sometimes — as in the seamen's strike of 1951 — opposed by everything in the country which the Histadrut can mobilize against them. The only analogue to such a state of affairs is, paradoxically, an «unofficial» strike in a Stalinist regime, where likewise such a strike implicitly antagonizes the official ideology, challenges the foundations of the Establishment, and often causes the regime to mobilize all its means (army included) for swiftly crushing the strikers. Usually the strikers are very surprised by such a reaction because they are rarely aware of the hidden implications of their action, and only meant to defend their economic interests — a task their trade union failed to carry out. Considering that the Histadrut is the largest employer in Israel and, simultaneously, the «Federation of Trade Unions,» one realizes its enormous power. It is a state within a state, the backbone of the Israeli society and economy. Historically it is the legitimate father of the state of Israel (as the socialist Zionists claim). It preceded the state and by its nationalist policies created a Jewish working class.

He who controls the Histadrut, controls Israel; Mapai has controlled the Histadrut for about 30 years — and also Israel (prior to 1948 it meant the Jewish community in Palestine). It is not by accident that Ben-Gurion, one of the founders of Histadrut and one time its secretary general, was the most significant premier of Israel. The present premier, Eshkol, and other leaders like Lavon, Namir, all had a similar past. The right wing of Zionism never achieved power in Israel (or Palestine) and was never strong enough to dethrone the left. It never constructed anything as powerful as the Histadrut, and even today is not a serious opponent for it. The only possible opponent who could overpower it, is the state itself. But a struggle between the state administration and the Histadrut requires either a schism in Mapai or an election victory to the right. Considering the fact that economic pressures and baits are employed in the election and the enormous financial, economic, and organizational means of the Histadrut, the right has a very slim chance. A military dictatorship by generals of Mapai (which consolidated its control of the army during Ben-Gurion's reign) is a more likely possibility.

The question of whether the Histadrut can be transformed from within and become a revolutionary tool, or at least a normal trade union, or whether it must be overthrown like any other institution of the existing Zionist state apparatus before any essential change can occur in Israel, has been a perplexing problem for revolutionary-minded Israelis.

The Israeli Communist party (rather «the two factions of the CP,» as it split in 1965) vehemently rejects any suggestion of a struggle against the Histadrut as an institution. The CP considers the Histadrut purely as a trade union (though perhaps a «reactionary» one). They refuse to recognize its essentially Zionist character (they consider any struggle against Zionism as «irrelevant,» «outdated,» «unnecessary,» etc). They even oppose any campaign for establishing a national health insurance system (which Ben-Gurion, as premier, tried to organize in order to transfer some power from the Histadrut to the government), because they consider this as transferring an asset from the working class (i.e., the Histadrut) to the bourgeoisie (i.e., the government).

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Of the three Zionist socialist parties (Mapai, Mapam and Achdut Haavoda [Unity of Labour]), none advocates revolution.

Mapai ceased talking about socialism about a decade ago, sometimes muttering to Social Democrats or trade unionists from abroad that Israel is «of course a Free Socialist society.» For proving this statement the visitors are as a matter of routine taken to some Kibbutz and this convinces them. Of course, when J.F. Dulles visited Ben-Gurion he was not taken to a Kibbutz.

Mapai is viciously anti-Soviet, supported French imperialism in Algeria, supports U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, initiated and actively participated in the Suez campaign. It is the mainstay of Zionism in Israel. The struggle between its factions (Ben-Gurion and some of his followers split off in 1965) is for power, not ideological or political differences.

Achdut Haavoda is a faction which split off Mapai sometime in the past for personal and ideological trifles. It hardly differs from Mapai in its foreign or interior policies, but as it runs a few Kibbutzim and is financed as an independent Zionist party it can go on vegetating.

Mapam is the traditional left extreme of Zionism. Its main constituent once advocated revolutionary ideology; and, for the unique case of the Jewish community in Palestine, peaceful coexistence between classes till

a Jewish state be created. As it happened the state came into existence, the revolutionary ideology dissipated, the peaceful coexistence remained.

Mapam advocates friendship with the USSR, denounces U.S. imperialism. In Zionist and Israeli issues of defense, labour, etc., it trails behind Mapai, occasionally uttering leftist noises. When it happens to be outside a coalition government that is usually not because it opposes some Mapai policy so strongly that it refused to join the coalition, but because Mapai preferred different partners.

It refuses to join a «Popular Front,» which the CP has repeatedly suggested, on the ground that the CP is non-Zionist (though recently one faction of the CP crossed the ideological barrier into Zionism) but Mapam never considered the antisocialist policies of religious or right-wing Zionist parties an obstacle for a joint coalition in the Jewish Agency or government.

The main role of Mapam is to mobilize the goodwill of socialists and left intellectuals in the West for Zionism.

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Outside the Zionist camp exist the CP. The history of the CP (as yet unwritten and unknown to most of its present rank and file) is the history of its splits over the question of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine (and since 1948 in Israel). It was torn between Zionism and Arab nationalism ever since Stalin imprinted his nationalist policies on the Communist movement.

The CP was born out of a split which occurred in a conference held in 1922 in Dantzig by the «Zionist Workers (Left)» party on the issue of choosing between joining the newly formed Communist International and the Zionist Congress. Those who chose Zionism (Lavon) eventually became leaders of Mapai. Those who chose Communism later founded the Palestine Communist party [PCP]. Some of these leaders, like W. Averbuch were deported by the British to Russia in the twenties and thirties where most of them were exterminated by Stalin.

Briefly, the difficulties of the CP were as follows: The founders of the party, the cadres, were Jewish immigrants from Russia, so too was their ideology and their political experience. The very fact that they arrived in Palestine meant that sometime or other they were Zionists. When they realized that they were part of a nationalist, colonisatory society which constituted a minority in the Palestinian society and which had

little sympathy for their internationalist, anti-imperialist policies, they directed their efforts towards recruiting Arab members and influencing Arab society.

Not only had they little knowledge of Arab language, history, uniqueness, customs, etc., but under the impact of Zionism the Palestinians became more nationalistic and fell under the influence of reactionary religious leadership.

In the Arab community too there was little chance of spreading internationalist, socialist, revolutionary ideology. Faced with the reality of two hostile, nationalistic communities combating each other by mass movements (general strikes, rebellion, armed underground movements, etc.) which the CP could not ignore, it was forced to shape a policy towards two conflicting nationalist movements. In 1936 it supported the Arab rebellion; in 1948 the establishing of Israel. On both occasions it split.

The last split occurred in 1965, again on the issue of policy towards Arab nationalist and Israel. One faction considers it as its duty to criticize the policies of Arab nationalist leaders towards Israel. They object to identifying Israel with imperialism, accept the facts established by Zionism as final, accept the existing status quo, and adopt a more «constructive» criticism of Israeli policies. They consider any fundamental critique of Zionism as «irrelevant». This faction relieves Mapam of its duties as the left extreme of the Zionist camp. They are tired of being unpopular in the Jewish population, try to become «respectable» and hope eventually to become mediators between the Zionist establishment and the USSR (whereas the latter prefers to deal with the Zionists directly).

The other faction continues the previous line and refuses to be «modernized.» It is reluctant to criticize Arab nationalist reactionary tendencies since it considers this to be the duty of Arab internationalists. It maintains the previous «unconstructive» criticism of Israeli policies. It does, however, insist (just like the other faction) on «transforming the Histadrut from within.» The eclectic character of such policies highlights the source of the numerous splits.

Both factions of the CP vie for recognition by Moscow; both denounce Peking; both are headed by leaders from the Stalin era who pursue Stalinist policies (alas, without the guiding hand of Stalin) both employ the old Stalinist organizational methods. It is a case of a Stalinist party torn between two antagonistic nationalisms.

The CP always did, and still does, recognise the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, yet, following Moscow, they oppose changes

in the territorial status quo, thus sanctifying annexations made by Ben-Gurion in 1948.

Both factions fail to recognise Zionism as a major cause of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and cover this up by the formula of «recognize the right of the Jews and of the Arabs in Palestine to self-determination.» What if these rights are materialized and the self-determined Jewish state chooses Zionism (as happens to be the case)? To this the CP has no answer.

In 1962 a small new left wing was formed, calling itself the «Israeli Socialist Organization.» Its monthly Matzpen [Compass] advocates de-Zionization of Israel as a necessary step towards any socialist revolution in Israel as well as any rapprochement with the Arab world. It refuses to sanctify any status quo and opposes the policies of «peaceful coexistence» with imperialism, capitalism or Zionism.

It refuses to subject revolutionary policies to the interests of the USSR or China. It considers nationalism to be the main weakness of the anti-imperialist forces and the best asset of imperialist policies. It believes that genuine internationalist revolutionaries can cooperate and eventually bring about a unification of presently antagonistic nation-states. This is a task which the nationalists cannot accomplish.

At present this organization has little influence on Israeli politics (though its very existence is a pressure on the CP and non-Zionist nationalists); but qualitatively it is an essential ingredient to future developments, for only through a clear and firm rejection of Zionism and any other sort of Israeli nationalism (there is a non-Zionist type) can a link be established between revolutionaries inside Israel and those acting through the Arab world.

Such a link is necessary for achieving the historical task confronting revolutionaries in this area in the next few decades; namely, that of establishing a Unified Socialist Republic from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.

