

As we know, the Imperialist intervention to maintain control of and exploitation of the economic and geographical resources of the Middle East is concentrated against the national democratic struggles of the Palestinian and the Omani people. The form this intervention takes is principally one of 'Vietnamisation'; that is, carrying out its reactionary plans through local agents: the Zionist State of Israel with the collusion of Arab reactionaries on the one hand; the fascist State of Iran, and the reactionary regimes of Saudi Arabia and of Sultan Qabus on the other. In this way, Imperialism seeks to disguise the anti-Imperialist, national democratic character of the struggles of the Palestinian and Omani people; to present them as 'local quarrels' in which its only interest is peace and stability; to divide the two struggles from each other, from other anti-Imperialist struggles and from the anti-capitalist struggles in the Imperialist countries themselves.

To some extent, the use of oil as a weapon in the October War, under pressure from the popular forces in the Arab world, has challenged this myth of 'separate' struggles for the democratic and working class forces in Britain. Through its effects on the economic situation in Britain, too, it has begun to clarify the inter-connexion of the Revolution in the Gulf with the anti-capitalist struggle in Britain. However, it would be wrong to believe there is not great confusion and misunderstanding on these questions within the working class and anti-capitalist forces here. Zionist ideology and chauvinism remain dominant influences within them: and the appeal for international support issued by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman following the intensified military campaign of the Imperialists and their local stooges in the last few months, has served to point up the limitations of our solidarity work in the past, which by and large remains restricted to students and already-constituted left-wing groupings. We do not feel that calling a demonstration in June, seeking closer co-operation between solidarity groups or producing a monthly bulletin will, in themselves, overcome this important weakness in our work.

However, the present situation for this work in Britain is extremely promising. 84 Labour Party M.P.'s recently signed a motion attacking British military and governmental involvement in the repression of the Omani people's struggle, on the grounds that it was colonialist, anti-socialist and anti-democratic. Democratic opinion in Britain has none of the doubts about the justness of the people's war in Oman that cloud its judgement of the Palestinian Revolution. While recognising that the two struggles are inseparably linked in practice, we should pay attention to the different status they have for democratic public opinion in Britain at the moment.

It is with this in mind that we feel the setting up of a national Oman Solidarity Campaign is an urgent priority. It is by firstly offering this practical means of expression to the potential support among the working class movement for the Revolution in Oman, that a sound basis can be laid for challenging the influence of chauvinist and Zionist ideologies within it, and for building wider support for the Palestinian's struggle, too. At the moment, few members of the Labour Party, constituency parties, trade union branches or liberal humanitarian organisations are prepared to affiliate with local committees which, like ourselves, require them to take a progressive stand on Palestine in order to give active support to the struggle in Oman. A national Oman Solidarity Campaign with well-known social-democratic figures prominently involved would remove this "All or Nothing" obstacle, which at present deprives the Omani people of a wide range of support from within Britain.

We therefore feel that the demonstration in Sheffield or Birmingham projected for Saturday, June 7th to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the armed revolution in Oman, should constitute the first public activity of the national campaign. This makes the discussion we are calling for a matter of some urgency, since the time between now and June would have to be spent, not only in organisational details of the demonstration itself, but in using it as a target to mobilise support for the national campaign, gaining the affiliation of as many prominent individuals and democratic/working class organisations in Britain as possible, at both a local and national level.