

THE FAILURE OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY AIMS OF IMPERIALISM AND ISRAEL

J. POSADAS – 11 June 1967, last day of the 6th Day War.

The crisis in the Middle east opens a new phase in the development of the world revolution. It is not a simple military crisis. It is a new phase in the world revolution. The masses have defeated imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy. They have imposed their decision.

The contradictions involved are immense, insoluble. Logically, imperialism should have invaded the Middle East as soon as the oil wells were closed and the relations broke down.

The masses have routed the right-wing sectors influenced by imperialism in their own countries. This new phase in the world revolution is going to have immense consequences in the Workers States and the Communist parties.

The problems of the Middle East have concentrated the minds. Through them, the world vanguard glimpsed into an aspect of the final settlement of accounts. It sees the mighty world forces gathering in the Middle East coming to blows in the confrontation between Israel and the Arab countries. World war can break out at any moment.

For the bourgeois class, the Middle East has always been a world center of concern. This war happened in one part of the world, but its repercussions are worldwide. More repercussions will come soon. These events are going to influence the course of the political revolution in China and Cuba; they are going to stimulate the political revolution in the USSR and the Workers States of Central Europe. In the nationalist revolutions, these events are

going to show the need for greater socialist advances and gains. In the bonapartist¹ role played by leaders like Nasser in Egypt, the need for more socialist aspects and measures is going to be felt.

Syria is a "non-formed" Workers State

In Syria, the statised² sector of the economy has become very much larger than the private one³. From the economic point of view, Syria is a Workers State. It is no longer a capitalist State. We call it a "non-formed" Workers State because its State does not yet have the political organs, the structure or the functioning of a Workers State. This is why we made for Syria this new characterization of the "non-formed Workers State".

Still in Syria, 80% of the land, all the banking sector, commerce and the large industries have been statised. The limit is that the organization of this State sector, and its leadership, are still in the hands of tendencies that do not represent this economic transformation. In the State of Syria, the economic bases are those of a Workers State, but proletarian organization does not exist at political level or in the juridical structures. In the organization of the Syrian economy, the army, the workers militias and the petit bourgeoisie intervene. If

¹ The adjective '**bonapartist**' was used by Trotsky when he compared the USSR under Stalin with the period of Thermidorian reaction after the French Revolution of 1789. See Trotsky: "The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism", Feb 1935.

² **To statise**: J Posadas uses this verb instead of 'to nationalise' to indicate here that it was not a national bourgeoisie that got hold of the nationalised property. The State did, allowing the country to benefit. This was particularly important in Egypt because of the oil, but there was oil in Syria too.

³ The military **government of Salah Jadid** (1965-1970) nationalized large parts of the Syrian economy. With the support of the USSR and Workers States of Eastern Europe, he kept at bay both imperialism and the weak Syrian bourgeoisie. He insisted on a fair separation between State and religion. He fought against Israel and S. Arabia. He helped the Palestinians and the PLO (as in Jordan). The Syrian Communist Party supported him. He aimed at building an inter-Arab military alliance..

Yankee imperialism started this war, which it did, it was to was to destroy the advance of the progress of the Syrian revolution through the use of Israel.

With this quick war, imperialism wanted to terrify the masses of the Middle East, crush their combative spirit, overthrow the governments, install military dictatorships and liquidate the revolutionary conquests. Imperialism wanted to reverse the nationalizations. It wanted to destroy the proletarian vanguard of Syria that had helped in the formation of popular militias. Imperialism achieved none of these aims. The Israeli army was stopped⁴; it could not enter Syria because the masses stood ready to fight, children, women, men, the young and the old. Neither Jehovah, Mahomet nor any prophet could have changed their minds. Imperialism decided to press no further. It did not want civil war to start spreading throughout the Middle East.

The same goes for Egypt. Imperialism won militarily against the Egyptian army, but it did not win socially. The masses did not succumb to intimidation. They drew closer together. The events of this war simulated in them a heightened process of political maturing. This is how the permanent revolution expresses itself in the Middle East.

The masses understood that they could not rely too much on external help, however desirable and necessary that was. They saw the need to draw close together. In every country, they realized that this was the way to resist the reactionary forces opposed to their progress.

⁴ Israel lost a whole battalion at Tel Fakhir in Syria. At the end of its 6 days war in Syria, it occupied the Syrian Golan but could not annex it.

They could see also that, from Africa to the Middle East, this war was being orchestrated by Yankee imperialism.

Imperialism is after the destruction the Syrian revolution

In the context of this war, it is not right to speak of "an Israeli army". The army that attacked the Arab countries was an imperialist one. It was imperialism that conducted this war. Wherever you look, imperialism acts in the same way, under guises, as it did in Haiti (1915-1934), the Dominican Republic (1965), Vietnam (1950-1969), etc. Left to its own devices, Israel could never carry the economic weight represented by the military involved in this war. Israel threw itself into this adventure because it has the full backing of imperialism.

Israel did not get what it wanted either. It had wanted the destruction of Egypt and Syria, but the Soviet Union intervened. The Soviet Union had to stop Israel. It could not allow Israel to settle in Syria.

Imperialism won a degree of military victory but it did not smash the progress of the revolution. Indeed, its war helped the opposite to happen. The masses stayed together and centralized around their conviction that it was necessary to go further.

To measure the depth of this situation, it is enough to compare what the Arab countries have achieved, and what Israel achieves. In Syria, nearly 80% of property is nationalized and there are popular militias. In Egypt, a large part of industry is nationalized, along with the bank, foreign trade and much of production. The Aswan dam that supplies the whole country in electricity is in State hands. Compares this with Israel where the only achievement is the intense concentration of the economy

around finance capital. The kibbutz have no more social or numerical importance. They are no longer what they were in the beginning.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia joined in the war against Israel, but only to contain, and to be of use for a counter-revolutionary coup should the need arise. But in these matters, king Hussein of Jordan and king Faisal of Saudi Arabia had no power of decision.

The masses of Syria and Egypt are going to influence the soldiers of Israel. In one way or the other, the Israeli soldiers will become aware that Syria and Egypt fight to expropriate imperialism, feudalism and capitalism. The poorer masses of Israel see this; and they are bound to see that, in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, there are workers, peasants and young officers who fight the likes of the Husseins and the Faisals.

Influenced by the more conciliatory policies of Nasser⁵, the United Front of Syria, Iraq and Egypt remained circumstantial. Nasser leans increasingly on the "bonapartist" side of his role, but this is not a permanent feature of his policies. He was wary of confronting too directly all the feudal scoundrels around him, but the masses of Egypt intervened. They hoisted him into the government, imposed themselves and won from him measures closer to Socialism than to bonapartism.

This war ended in defeat, but this did not scare the masses. This is one of the most important events in history. In Egypt, a country just defeated by this lightning war, the masses do not feel crushed. They did

⁵ **Nasser**, 1918-197, was President of Egypt between 1956-70. Before even becoming president, he helped overthrow the monarchy in Egypt and stimulated an important process of land reform. In 1962, he nationalized the Suez canal. He became more conciliatory towards capitalism in later years.

not go away to hide or cry in their houses. They took to the streets instead, and they shouted "Forward!". It is at such times that you measure the depth of the will of the masses to triumph. They do not feel defeated. They know that the solution is social and not military. They feel sure and confident that they will re-conquer socially what they lost militarily. They plan new blows to expropriate the lands, to take the social reins of leadership, to make workers and peasants' militias.

The policy of pacific coexistence is nearing its end

Expect changes in the Soviet leadership, and expect these to affect Kosygin⁶ or Brezhnev, or both. These Middle East events have uncovered the cracks in the Soviet policy of pacific coexistence. A tendency in the Soviet Union is going to want to express the will of the masses to confront imperialism more severely and more energetically than before. The Soviet masses defend their Workers State. They are aware of its immense power.

In Syria, the will of the Soviet Workers State to intervene prevailed over of the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy not to do anything. The Soviet Workers State forced Kosygin and Brezhnev to shake the Soviet bureaucracy out of its inaction. Kosygin and Brezhnev complied, although they continued to conciliate with the Yankee imperialists. The latter were getting ready to have Egypt, Syria and Iraq invaded, and smashed if possible. They wanted for those countries what they did in Santo Domingo⁷ and Vietnam. No difference. If the Yankee imperialists did not go further, it is because they were stopped.

⁶ **Alexei Kosygin** was one of the Soviet leaders with Brezhnev and Podgorny.

⁷ **Santo Domingo**, capital of the Dominican Republic.

The Soviet fleet deployed to the Middle East, but the Soviet bureaucracy kept trying to conciliate with imperialism down to the last minute. Such are the contradictions. The bureaucracy is not interested in the advance of the world socialist revolution because revolution escapes its control; and it is not in its interests to let the revolution be crushed either, because it gets crushed in the process.

By moving the Soviet fleet to the Middle East, the Soviet leaders managed to keep some prestige and authority in the masses and the nationalist tendencies. The actions of the bureaucracy do not go beyond the limits of their conciliation with Yankee imperialism.

For the Middle East, it is necessary to call for land occupations and Workers and Peasants' Governments. The Workers States must make a United Front with the Arab masses. In this war, the Workers States did not support those masses. The latter did not feel the force of the Workers States shoring them up. All the same, the intervention of the Soviet Workers State is going to help nationalist tendencies further along the road of Socialism.

There is already an empirical United Front between people in the world. For it to become organic, it needs conscious leadership and theoretical comprehension.

Forward to a program of revolutionary unification throughout the Middle East

The events of this war have reiterated the need to build a revolutionary leadership in the Workers States. The Kosygin-Brezhnev leadership wants to appear opposed to imperialism before the world Communist parties and the

masses of the Workers States. The Soviet leadership is against imperialism too, but it is afraid. The Soviets have the power to crush imperialism militarily and socially. They do not do it because the crushing of imperialism entails the intervention of the masses, and when the masses intervene, they will crush the bureaucracy as well as imperialism. This is what the bureaucracy fears. Its problem is that it cannot allow imperialism to advance any more either.

The program to uphold for the Middle East is one of unification: Forward to the Soviet Socialist United States of the Middle East, and forward to a Soviet Socialist Arab Federation with the right of self-determination for the Jewish population of Israel. Lands must be seized, along with the oil wells. Concretely, popular militias must be set up. The exploited masses need an independent political life, independent forms of political organization, workers' parties based on the trade unions, and the like.

It is not the right time to confront the Nasser leadership of Egypt. Right now, the task is to build a United Front in the whole Middle East aimed at the forcible eviction of imperialism. This requires the independent organization of the exploited masses on the basis of a program for Socialist revolution.

The conduct of imperialism is completely desperate. It wanted to contain the progress of the Arab revolution, but it had to count on Israel in the end. Reduced to this, it failed to install military dictatorships in Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The Arab masses continue to have influence in the world. They are soon going to have more influence on the masses of Africa.

At least twelve countries are close to being Workers States: Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Mali, Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Algeria, Tanzania, Ghana, are examples. This shows the great vigor of the revolution, and it shows that imperialism has failed to contain it.

The events of this war represent a phase in the immense development of the permanent revolution on a world scale. The basic conclusion to draw is that the masses are not afraid, that they want to struggle, and that they are not afraid of the atomic war. They would not be so strong if they did not have the idea of Socialism in mind. The Arab countries lost the war, but the Arab masses lost no social conquest. The imperialist army had the strength and the military capacity to defeat them, but it could not retake the social conquests that they had already won.

In Syria, the general secretary of the trade unions is also the organizer of the workers' militias. This comrade spends his life in the unions' office, where he has a bed and a portrait of Che Guevara. Guevara's portrait speaks of the unity of the world revolution; and the workers' militias speak of the revolutionary communist task in hand.

Guerrilla struggles did not develop in Syria or Egypt. The mobilization of the masses took place instead, along with the very important role of workers militias. Where the workers militias operated, the proletariat organized and led the population. This process remained uneven, but the masses succeeded in organizing their own activities. By its conduct, the vanguard of the masses proved that it understood the need to defeat not just Israel and imperialism, but the private property layer tied to imperialism in every country.

Arab unification needs the grounding of social and revolutionary aims

Syria and Egypt lost the war but the revolution keeps growing. Historic outcomes are ultimately decided by the social aspect and not by the military one. The military aspect is only the instrument through which the social necessity of the progress of the masses comes to prevail. That is to say, weapons alone do not decide. This is why this military defeat has not demoralized the Arab masses, particularly those in Syria and Egypt.

To unite the struggles of the Arab masses, and to overthrow feudal regimes as in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait, the revolutionary tendencies in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Libya will have to base themselves more on the conclusions that we have drawn.

The bourgeois nationalist revolutionary leaderships accuse and blame imperialism. Boumedienne⁸ of Algeria and Nasser of Egypt do this, but they do not call on the masses to mobilize against imperialism. Indeed, they put restrictions on the movements of those who mobilize against imperialism; and they narrow these movements down to small circles of elites without mobilizing the masses.

The ascent of the revolution works against this. It works against the conciliatory tendencies of the nationalist bourgeoisies in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. New nationalist leaders constantly arise with the wish to expropriate imperialist properties. As this kind of thing requires mass mobilizations, imperialism prepares all its forces for use against the masses - a new war included. Imperialism

⁸ **Houari Boumedienne**, 1932-1978, Chair of the Revolutionary Council of Algeria from 1965-1976.

will try everything to stop the expropriation of the oil. This present war seems over, but imperialism has not given up trying to crush the Arab revolution. It was hindered this time by the Arab masses and the actions of the Soviet bureaucracy, but it will try again tomorrow.

During this war, political HQs were formed to coordinate the working class, the peasants, the revolutionary soldiers and other exploited layers. In Syria, these centers were often the Trade Unions. Now it is necessary to pose that those same workers, peasants, soldiers and others, organize themselves independently from the government, and independently from the Party of the government. They must build an anti-imperialist United Front between themselves and the revolutionary nationalist bourgeois tendencies (military and civilian) of their countries, to expel imperialism and overthrow capitalism.

The program of this United Front must not be to crush Israel. Instead, it must call on the Israeli masses and invite them to join the United Front. The basis for that United Front must be the program to create the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics of the Middle East with the right of self-determination for the Jewish masses.

The problem posed by Israel can only be resolved by the socialist revolution of the Middle East.

It is not very long ago that the Syrian masses broke out of feudalism⁹, but they are already on the road to workers' militias and statisations. These masses show

⁹ By defeating the followers of king **Faisal of Syria** at Maysalun in July 1920, French imperialism de facto put an end to monarchy in Syria. From 1920, France administered the region through a number of governments and territories. The Syrian State was declared a Republic in 1932.

the way to the rest of the Middle East. It was through their struggles against imperialism in the past that they became unified in the first place. They learnt then that Arab unification can only happen on the basis of social and revolutionary solutions, anti-imperialist measures, anti-capitalist measures and socialist measures.

In Syria, Iraq and Egypt, the trade union leaders must not depend on the nationalist revolutionary leaderships. They must send their own calls to the Arab world - calls to unify the trade union movements, the workers, the peasants, the students, the soldiers. They must send their own appeals to the masses. They must tell these of the need to mobilize, to occupy the lands, occupy the imperialist enterprises, seize the oil wells. The masses will want to declare those assets of public interest and will get them nationalised. The land must be distributed to the peasants. Workers-Peasants alliances must be set up in order to create Workers and Peasants Governments.

The future of the world workers' movement is integrally tied to the future of the revolution. In the Middle East, two essential slogans must be guides to action: For the independent organization of the exploited masses, and for the Workers' Party based on the Trade Unions. The task is to accompany all demands for wages, trade union rights, the sliding scale of wages, proletarian democracy, Soviets, etc.. In Syria, those more transitory demands must be linked to calls for workers' control in the expropriated oil companies. The transitory demands must include trade union independence, the right to print, the right to speak, the right to organize, to liberation of jailed revolutionary workers. One must pose also the slogan for the construction of a Mass Communist

International based on the program to crush imperialism now, and in the whole world.

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