

Report on the August 25-31 Convention of the Organization of Arab Students in the U.S. and Canada, held in Ann Arbor.

By Jan Garrett and Peter Herreshoff

The O.A.S. convention reflected a further deepening of the radicalization of the Arab students in the direction of revolutionary socialism and identification with the liberation struggles of the colonial world.

Attending were three to four hundred Arab students from North American universities and colleges and invited guests from fraternal organizations, including the Organization of Syrian students in Syria, the Iranian Students' Association in the U.S., the Young Socialist Alliance and the Black Panther Party.

The focal point of the discussion at the conference was the Palestinian revolution in the light of the revolutionary experiences of Algeria, Cuba and Vietnam. A delegation from Al Fatah was present.

A wing of the O.A.S. has developed which considers itself to be Marxist and looks on the YSA as the legitimate Marxist tendency in the U.S. Ziyad Husami and Walid Khadduri, outgoing President and Vice-President at this convention, belong to this wing. They were instrumental in inviting the YSA to attend the convention and bring literature, of which we sold more than \$200. (40 Jewish Question, 50 Zionism and the Arab Revolution, 40 each of Che's pamphlets On Vietnam and the World Revolution and Socialism and Man, and others.)

Husami introduced the keynote speaker, Stokely Carmichael, Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party, as a representative of "the most revolutionary party in the United States." He pointed out that the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee had opposed the 1967 Israeli aggression with no prior contact with the Arab students. This fact, Husami said, testifies to the close ties between the oppressed blacks and the oppressed Arab nation. Both Husami and Carmichael received a standing ovation.

The revolutionary wing was also instrumental in organizing the convention, inviting speakers, and setting the agenda. They made sure that representatives of the YSA were given free tickets to their convention banquet. For us, Husami's speech was the high point of the whole convention; it contained a thoroughly Marxist (he reads The Militant, Intercontinental Press, and International Socialist Review), balanced, strategy for the Arab revolution. He spoke for: a unified, socialist Arab world; for a multi-ethnic Palestine; against peaceful coexistence with imperialism; for people's militias and the arming of the masses; against one-party systems; for the building of a pan-Arab revolutionary combat party; for alliance with anticapitalist forces everywhere; to put intellectuals at the service of the worker-peasant masses engaged in struggle; for solidarity with Al Fatah, the vanguard of the Arab revolution. His analysis of Nasserism and Baathism was as complete and balanced as any of our movement's.

The revolutionary wing, which is strongest in urban centers like Detroit, New York, Washington and Chicago, suffered a setback at the national organizational level due to a split in an informal block with the Baathists. They are a minority on the new executive committee of the O.A.S. The Nasserites seem to have a dominant position on the executive. Unfortunately, business was conducted in Arabic so that our details are sketchy. A resolution was passed supporting the federalization of Biafra into Nigeria.

We obtained copies of the Arab Journal, Summer Issue, put out by the O.A.S. outgoing leadership. This issue contains an article from Leon's Jewish Question, the article by Peter Buch and one by the Israeli Socialist Organization from the YSA pamphlet, an interview with Isaac Deutscher, and other articles. The magazine can be ordered from O.A.S., 2929 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025.

In the future we should be able to continue our fraternal relations with the revolutionary tendency in the O.A.S. and increase our collaboration with them. For instance, we could invite the O.A.S. to send observers to the YSA convention, and continue to bolster the revolutionary tendency in O.A.S. by bringing our literature to whatever gatherings they invite us to, and by seeking opportunities to collaborate in demonstrations with the O.A.S.