down such an agreement since it was empowered to ratify foreign treaties. Many deputies have criticized 'Israel' for breaching a pledge to allow Palestinians to export their farm produce directly to Europe.

These tendencies hark back to the time of the Venice Declaration when western Europe recognized that the Palestinians had to be party to a solution to the Middle East conflict. This does not mean that the European bourgeoisie is prepared to recognize, must less fulfill, the full range of Palestinian national rights. The view of most western European states concerning an international conference still to a large extent mirrors that of the US - a less than fully empowered conference without the PLO being represented on an equal footing with other parties. Still, there are those in official European politics, who see that the course pursued by the US administration and 'Israel' will not bring peace to the' Middle East. Even if the new tendency is ultimately nothing more than an alternative imperialist tactic to protect the Zionist state, it does mean that the US cannot count on Europe to merely tail behind on the diplomatic scene. This reality, coupled with the problems which the uprising has caused Arab reaction, was a factor motivating the Schultz plan.

STILLBORN US PLAN

Schultz introduced his plan with sugar-coated phrases such as: «Palestinian participation is essential to success in the peace process. Palestinians must achieve control over political and economic decisions that affect their own lives» (*International Herald Tribune,* March 3rd). Regardless of his attempted 'pro-Palestinian' veneer, the US plan is only a new device for resurrecting Camp David and 'autonomy' which the Palestinians rejected long ago. According to US sources, the process proposed by Schultz is as follows:

- «Six months of negotiations, to begin May 1, for the election of an administrative council to represent Palestinians on the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip during an interim phase of self-administration.
- «An international conference to be convened in April with the participation of Israel, Syria, Egypt, a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.
- «Talks to begin in December for one year between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the final status of the territories. Interim self-administration to go into effect once those talks begin.
- «Whatever solution is produced by these talks to take effect three years after the interim period has begun» (*International Herald Tribune,* March 15).

These points, supplemented by Schultz's own arguments for his plan, make it obvious that the international conference proposed by the US not only intends to exclude the PLO, but is simply window dressing for direct negotiations whereby Arab regimes would be drawn into the game of containing the Palestinian quest for genuine independence and statehood. Far from meaning real «control over the political and economic decisions that affect their own lives,» this model would mean Palestinian administration of daily municipal affairs under the watchful eyes - and cannons - of the Israeli and Jordanian regimes.

Putting «The Case for America's Mideast Peace Plan» in *The Washington Post,* Schultz had the following to say about the international conference: «The United States is a firm and consistent supporter of direct, bilateral negotiations between Israel and all of its neighbors as the means to achieve a comprehensive peace. At the same time, the United States has always been willing to consider any approach that could lead to direct negotiations, including an international conference... All those attending the conference will be required to accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and to renounce violence and terrorism. The conference will be specifically enjoined from intruding in the negotiations, imposing solutions or vetoing what had been agreed bilaterally» (*International Herald Tribune,* March 19-20).

In essence, the US plan is but a way of saving 'Israel' from its crisis by circumventing the PLO, the expression of the Palestinian people's national identity and efforts to take control of their lives. It is but another imperialist plan to cement the dispersion of the Palestinians, dealing - and superficially at that - only with those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This means negating not only the many Palestinians driven from their homeland, but also those remaining in 'Israel' proper, in order to liquidate the Palestinian cause and national liberation movement.

The greatest proof that the US plan essentially aims to save 'Israel' is seen in the interaction between the US and the Israeli leadership. Besides Schultz's holding separate meetings with Prime Minister Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres, due to the internal Israeli disagreements, the US further pampered 'Israel' even though

January demonstration in support of the uprising, in Hamburg, West Germany.